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ABSTRACT

This document analyzes six school-reform models for at-risk youth. Part 1 examines three curriculum-based reform programs that explicitly target curriculum and instruction: Reading Recovery; Success for All; and the Academy model. These programs focus on changes in student achievement and work within the structure of existing schools. Part 2 describes programs that attempt to reorganize the traditional school structure. The Accelerated Schools Model, Comer schools, and school-based management projects are examples of governance-based reforms. Individual chapters describe program adoption, design, implementation, and results. Data were derived from: (1) site observations of and interviews conducted at both the original and a replication site for each model; and (2) document analysis. Findings indicate that successful reform requires time and money; almost all programs confer increased decision making on teachers; and programs that are broader in scope require implementation based on context. Curriculum-based reform demonstrates more predictable and immediate impacts on student learning and depends on individual teachers' skills and proficient management. Governance-based reforms have goals that are long-range and constantly changing and rely on sustained leadership and teacher commitment. Finally, regardless of the type of reform selected, greater professional opportunities for teachers may increase the chances of long-term institutional growth. (LMI)

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SCHOOL REFORM FOR YOUTH AT RISK:

Analysis of Six Change Models

Volume I: Summary and Analysis

1994

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SCHOOL REFORM FOR YOUTH AT RISK:

Analysis of Six Change Models

Volume I: Summary and Analysis

Heather McCollum

1994

Prepared for the
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This volume summarizes findings from a study of six school reform frameworks implemented in high-poverty schools: Reading Recovery, Success for All, High School Academies, Accelerated Schools, the School Development Program, and school-based management. The report analyzes case studies of two sites for each model and discusses strengths and weaknesses of each framework. The study was conducted by Policy Studies Associates, under contract with the Office of the Undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

This report contains a summary and analysis of the data. A companion volume contains individual case studies. Data were collected during the 1990-91 school year. A subsequent report will present findings from two more sites each of Success for All, Accelerated Schools, the School Development Program, and School-Based Management, along with two sites implementing the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) program.

The conduct of this study and the preparation of this report were sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Undersecretary, under Contract No. LC 89089001 (Elois Scott, Project Officer). Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Education. Nor do the examples included herein imply judgment by the Department of the contractor as to their compliance with federal or other requirements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the United States' contribution to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's international study of effective practices for at-risk children and youth, the Department of Education has selected six models that show promise in reducing the risk of school failure. The programs vary in their target populations, educational strategies, and range and scope of their goals. All have been adopted in several locations and continue to expand. In this study, we examined both the original and a replication site for each model. The programs are:

- Reading Recovery, an intensive intervention system for first-grade students who show early evidence of reading problems. The program relies on individual diagnosis and tutoring sessions with a strong emphasis on teaching independent learning strategies. The model is highly dependent on a unique staff development model, in which teachers teach each other along with students throughout the course of their involvement with the program. The goal is to return students to the regular classroom, on grade level in reading, as quickly as possible. To learn about the program, we visited Ohio State University, where the U.S. version of the program was developed, and observed its implementation in the Columbus City Schools. We also went to Tucson, Arizona, where Reading Recovery is one of the strategies used districtwide in Chapter 1 instruction.

- Success for All, a combination of many intervention strategies put together by Robert Slavin and other researchers at Johns Hopkins University. Drawing on a number of studies of effective remedial and compensatory education practices, the combination of components is designed to bring all students up to grade level in basic skills by the third grade. Its complete form includes a preschool component, a language-based full-day kindergarten program, one-on-one tutoring, periodic assessments, cooperative learning, a set of phonetic beginning reading materials, worksheets to accompany primary reading, and a Family Support Team. We visited two of the project's pilot schools in Baltimore and a newly implemented, modified version in Charleston, South Carolina.

- The Academy Model, a school-within-a-school designed to encourage at-risk students to complete high school and to equip them with marketable skills in a variety of careers. This three- or four-year program has its own team of teachers and "block rosters" approximately 100 students, who stay within the Academy for most of their school day. The model seeks to integrate both academic and vocational skills and includes a work experience component. We visited the Business Academy in Philadelphia, where the program developed over twenty years ago, and a newer Financial Services Academy in Portland, Oregon.

- The Accelerated Schools Model, designed by Henry Levin and his colleagues at Stanford University. In his view, the traditional remedial approach to schooling for at-risk youth unfairly limits their access to learning. Instead, the Accelerated Schools model seeks to provide challenging instruction to all students; it rejects pullout approaches to compensatory education and minimizes drill and practice in basic skills. Changes in school governance facilitate the development and refinement of appropriate new curriculum. Schools are run by "cadres" of teachers and parents, each responsible for important aspects of the schooling experience. For this study, we

visited one of the pilot schools in the San Francisco Bay Area and one of several sites in the state of Missouri that have recently adopted the model.

- The School Development Program, also called the "Comer Process" after its founder at the Yale Child Study Center. James Comer believes that a crucial issue in the education of disadvantaged youth is the increasing disjuncture between home and school cultures. He designed a governance system to address this problem that includes a school planning team of teachers, parents, and school specialists. In a variety of ways, parents are encouraged to become a part of their children's education. We visited two of the pilot schools in New Haven, Connecticut, and several replication sites in Prince George's County, Maryland.

- School-based management projects, a broad category that includes a range of organizational restructuring initiatives. The defining characteristic of this reform is the shift in authority from the district to the school building, usually with increased decisionmaking roles for teachers and sometimes parents. For this study, we examined two different approaches. In Santa Fe, New Mexico, the public schools are active participants in a statewide effort to facilitate governance at the school level. We visited an elementary school run by teachers, who voted to eliminate the position of principal. They are also developing curriculum inspired by Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools. We also visited Dade County, Florida, which for several years has been refining a school-based management system for many of its 271 schools. There the impetus came from a desire to contribute to the professionalization of the teaching force in ways suggested by the Carnegie Foundation report Schools for the 21st Century.

These programs differ widely in scope and intent; in some cases, the target population--at-risk students--is the only characteristic they have in common. To facilitate analysis of this broad range of initiatives, we divided the models into two categories.

Part I covers Reading Recovery, Success for All, and the Academy model, all of which explicitly target curriculum and instruction. Although there are significant differences among them, all three programs in Part I focus directly on changes in student achievement, whether in literacy or employability skills. They all work within the structure of existing schools and do not require broad changes in existing organization or governance. We refer to these efforts as curriculum-based reforms.

Accelerated Schools, Comer schools, and school-based management projects, discussed in Part II, are also focused to varying degrees on changes in classroom practice, but they approach instructional reform through a reorganization of the traditional school structure. In all cases more authority is given to teachers; in some cases parents are called in as partners as well. We call these programs governance-based reforms.

Data Collection

We first reviewed the literature on these program frameworks. After obtaining agreement to participate from the sites, we made arrangements to visit the school or schools in the spring of 1991. Two-person teams of experienced field researchers stayed on site for two to three days. We were particularly interested in gathering information from a variety of individuals at each site, all of whom were affected by the reform initiative in some way. Due to the wide difference in scope and focus of the six programs, the identity of those interviewed varied from setting to setting. In some cases

observations and interviews were focused on one school and the appropriate district personnel; in others we visited more than one school. For some programs we spent most of our time observing instruction, while in others we attended cadre meetings or staff training sessions. We worked with semistructured interview protocols tailored to each site.

In addition to interviews and observations, we reviewed all available documents, including any internal and external evaluations at each site. Because many of these projects are quite new, in some cases these data are incomplete. Particularly for the more comprehensive, schoolwide initiatives, it is simply too early to determine whether the reforms will have clear effects on traditional measures such as student test scores. In these cases, we looked more carefully at what researchers believe to be potential prior conditions for change in student achievement levels: the development of teacher knowledge, attitudes, and involvement in decisionmaking.

CURRICULUM-BASED REFORMS

Adoption

Prior to program adoption, these models require (1) obtaining reliable and sufficient funding from the district and (2) hiring a coordinator to supervise planning and training and negotiate with the principal and school staff. Only those staff directly involved in the programs need to sign on early in the process. In all cases, however, it is better to bring the rest of the school on board to support the effort, in order to improve coordination between the projects and the regular academic program.

Unlike governance-based reforms, these three programs require very little other than funding support from the host districts and can operate relatively autonomously. They do not need to be systemwide initiatives, and a district could feasibly select one of these interventions as a pilot project in a single school.

Design

All three programs are directly centered on the student. Program objectives in all cases are clearly stated in terms of student performance. Both Reading Recovery and Success for All emphasize the importance of early intervention, and both draw on extensive research bases to inform practice. The primary goals of the Academy model are keeping students in school and developing employability skills. It approaches this task by creating a smaller, more manageable environment that emphasizes personal relationships with adults and successful academic experiences.

The two primary grade programs differ in their approach to change efforts: Reading Recovery puts the teacher at the center of the change efforts while Success for All places more emphasis on carefully sequenced materials. Success for All is an example of a conventional approach to instructional change: the program and materials are designed by specialists who train teachers to use them. In this sense, the developers make all programmatic decisions. The staff training in Reading Recovery, which continues throughout the life of the program, gives teachers a foundation in research on literacy acquisition and then provides them with practice in making their own decisions based on this expertise.

All three programs focus on content, with a specified curriculum and instructional objectives. They offer teachers particular instructional techniques and lesson ideas rather than broad guidelines. In other words, all of these models envision an ideal situation in which certain specified activities occur.

Implementation

The program facilitators are the key personnel in all three sites. Principals are largely peripheral, although they can provide support and encouragement and in all sites that we visited were very enthusiastic about the programs and appreciative of the facilitators' efforts. District administrators also have much to gain and little to lose by not interfering with smooth program operation, and their active involvement is usually not crucial to project success.

The programs do not require strong vertical or horizontal linkages among the staff or between staff and administrators. All three are feasible interventions in a variety of different contexts, with a minimum of prerequisites necessary to achieve a fit with the existing school culture.

Of the three types of interventions, the Academy requires the least new financial investment. The other two programs are relatively expensive. In Reading Recovery, the teachers serve only a few students over the course of the year, while the cost of materials for Success for All is probably prohibitive for schools that lack a large allocation of Chapter 1 funds.

Results

None of the sites we visited had major problems in implementing these reforms. All had achieved at least some degree of institutionalization: the programs are accepted, routine parts of their respective organizations.

All three programs have their own data on student performance in the form of test scores or completion rates, and all have demonstrated a positive impact in the desired direction.

GOVERNANCE-BASED REFORMS

Adoption

Reformers planning school-based management approaches need a realistic appraisal of what will be involved in these transformations of governance and practice. These projects may be impossible without additional resources--particularly teacher time.

Consensus among stakeholders is a key ingredient in success. While all faculty members need not agree on ultimate objectives at the beginning, a shared decisionmaking model has the best chance for success when there is a common understanding of the need for fundamental change.

To work best, school-based management programs need to be part of a change process at all levels of the system. At the district level, important changes are needed, and we saw some evidence of initial steps in this direction. In addition to granting waivers of various regulations, the district office needs to shift from a system geared toward compliance monitoring to one that primarily offers facilitation and support.

Design

The driving spirit behind these reform efforts is the conviction that fundamental problems in the system cannot be solved through tinkering with the existing structure of the school. Beyond this general consensus, each approach has its own emphasis and direction. Only the Accelerated Schools model focuses explicitly on curriculum change.

All three models involve restructuring of governance systems to allow those in the trenches to determine the direction and scope of the change. All share an equally strong belief in change as an ongoing process rather than a fixed goal. For some of these programs, change is the content; the point is to rethink curriculum from scratch, using a mission statement or collectively developed vision as a guide. These reforms are ambitious and complex, but their advocates believe that the end result--the creation of a learning organization that is continuously improving and responding to new demands--is well worth the long-term investment of time and energy.

Implementation

Leadership is a key determinant of program success. While daily maintenance and management continue to be important, the ability to inspire, provoke, and motivate is crucial. Leadership comes from a number of sources in shared decisionmaking models: program developers (e.g., Comer and Levin), principals, and lead teachers. The district needs to create and maintain a climate conducive to risk taking.

For these reform efforts, unlike smaller-scale ones, the existing political and cultural context in the school is extremely important. Most of the places we visited seemed to be ready for these ambitious efforts; others may not yet be. Existing tensions and competing factions among faculty and staff can be sources of problems, but the problems are not insurmountable if addressed at an early stage.

In many ways, school-based reforms are characterized by trial and error development. The success stories in our group were aware of that fact and welcomed it. If school staffs do not already possess a high degree of tolerance for ambiguity, they must develop it to thrive in this process. Unlike other innovations, governance reforms offer no shortcuts to implementation. Each school must recreate the original labor-intensive task of developing collaborative work styles.

There are a number of hidden costs in these programs. While many teachers eagerly donate extra time to planning efforts, some staff members are stretched very thin. Ongoing technical assistance is important. We were told by participating staff that choosing school-based management/shared decisionmaking models as an inexpensive route to reform would be an unfortunate mistake.

Results

New governance structures are in place and currently operating in all of the sites we visited. The amount of participation in these restructured systems and the degree of actual authority in them varied from site to site. Many teachers felt professionally invigorated by this process; they believed they had more control over their work and were more effective with students as a result.

A pattern emerged across sites in which questions about basic working conditions, including problems of the physical plant, were tackled first. Discipline policy was frequently the next candidate

for revision. New approaches to instruction are often introduced for deliberation only after these essentials are settled.

The effect of these reforms on student performance is difficult to gauge. In some cases, it may be too early to expect the newfound authority and responsibility of the staff to translate into more motivated and inquiring students. Improvements in attendance and disciplinary measures in several sites indicate improvement in school climate, but few sites were able to point to concrete changes in achievement measures.

Standardized test scores are an inadequate measure of progress in these reform efforts. Districts may want to consider careful development of alternative indicators, both of achievement and of climate, to use as milestones in the process of restructuring governance in schools.

CONCLUSIONS

- The broader the scope of the intervention, the more implementation is dependent on context rather than content.
- While curriculum-based reforms depend on the motivation and skills of individual teachers and proficient management, more comprehensive reforms depend on group dynamics and expert leadership.
- In very different ways, almost all of the reform strategies we examined confer greater decisionmaking authority on teachers.
- Successful reform efforts take time--before adoption, during implementation, and even after institutionalization.
- Impact on student learning is more predictable and immediate from successful implementation of curriculum-based reforms; the goals of governance reforms are long-range and constantly evolving.
- The type of district commitment required depends on the scope of the reform.
- Without sustained leadership and teacher commitment, sweeping changes may be trivialized or absorbed into traditional structures.
- None of these school reform initiatives is inexpensive; the costs of the curriculum-based reforms can be more accurately predicted up front.
- Involving parents in these new reform initiatives is often extremely challenging, even when changes offer parents decisionmaking roles.
- In the programs we visited, there was a correlation between the amount of problem solving effort required of teachers in the different models and the nature of learning opportunities subsequently offered students.
- School reforms should be designed with the local setting and existing school culture in mind.

- Curriculum-based reforms need a realistic timetable for implementation, ongoing technical assistance, and competent management.

- Governance reforms need several years for planning, gradual implementation, and flexible assessment mechanisms to monitor progress; however, they should formulate clear goals for student outcomes at the very beginning.

- School-based management reforms should consider early adoption of a curriculum framework or set of instructional objectives; without some short-term achievable goals, projects often emphasize process indefinitely.

- In choosing a change strategy, districts must be aware of their own obligations in comprehensive reform.

- Regardless of the type of reform selected, increased professional opportunities and enhanced decisionmaking roles for teachers may increase the chances of long-term institutional growth.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Schools that serve large proportions of economically disadvantaged youth, including all those described in this study, face particular challenges. Barriers to quality education may arise from problems confronted by the population outside of school or from factors within the educational institutions themselves.

Other countries around the world face similar problems in educating at-risk youth. In 1990, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris commissioned a multi-national study called "Best Practices for Children and Youth at Risk of School Failure." This report represents the contribution of the United States to that effort, which will include case studies provided by 14 countries and several international foundations. In this introductory chapter, we first briefly review issues affecting the schooling of disadvantaged students in the U.S. and summarize current research on possible ways to improve education for these students. Next, we review the history of research on school reform initiatives over the last few decades. Finally, we describe the programs we analyze in the study and provide an overview of the report.

There is mounting evidence that living conditions for our poorest citizens, many of whom are children, have deteriorated significantly over the last decade (National Center for the Study of Children in Poverty, 1990; National Commission on Children, 1991). Many of the conditions experienced by children living in poverty have a direct impact on their schooling, and schools with large numbers of poor children are often consumed with problems that go well beyond academics.

These problems influenced, to varying degrees, all of the sites selected for this report. The families of low-income students are often highly mobile; all of the schools visited for this study have high annual turnover rates. Inadequate nutrition and health care have powerful negative effects on classroom learning, and schools are typically unequipped to compensate for this situation. Many of

our schools are located in areas that are plagued by violence and the drug trade. In addition, a large percentage of the children in the schools studied come from single parent homes where there is often no adult present, that have too little income to supplement school materials, or where the language of the home is not English.

All of these factors, often found in combination, present serious obstacles to children's successful negotiation of the school environment. In addition, children are placed at risk not only by their background characteristics but by school characteristics as well; there are additional problems that begin inside the school door. These schools often are located in buildings that are in need of repair, with insufficient materials and high student-teacher ratios. Schools that serve many children in poverty are often judged to be poor performers on the basis of standardized test scores and may thus be disproportionately subject to tight district controls. There may be numerous student discipline problems that the building administration is too overloaded to handle, and teachers suffer the effects of this inadequate support. Many students in high-poverty schools qualify for various supplementary programs, and children may experience a highly fragmented school day.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that researchers have found reform efforts to be particularly challenging in these settings (e.g., Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990). We turn now to a brief overview of research on reforms tailored to this population of students.

School Reform for Disadvantaged Students

The reports of the early 1980s resulted in an unusual amount of activity in state legislatures, most of which was aimed at achieving "excellence" through raised standards for both students and teachers. Just three years after the publication of A Nation at Risk, a survey by the Education Commission of the States revealed that 45 states and the District of Columbia had altered their reported standards for earning a high school diploma by increasing the number of required courses (Pipho, 1986). In the wake of these enacted reforms, a number of researchers sought to refocus attention on the potential effects of more rigorous academic standards on students at risk of dropping out. It became evident that in the absence of instructional reform or extra assistance, the most

disadvantaged students were least likely to benefit from the stricter mandates (e.g., Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1987).

At the same time, the conventional wisdom about the most effective ways of educating at-risk students was increasingly questioned by researchers who drew on new evidence about the ways in which all children learn (Knapp & Shields, 1990). Until recently, most remedial and compensatory education programs were designed to provide low achieving students with additional practice on basic skills. In this approach, learning is seen as a hierarchical process in which certain elementary skills (phonetic decoding of words, arithmetic computation) need to be firmly in place before higher-order thinking skills such as problem solving, mathematical reasoning, and composition can be effectively taught. However, more current findings in cognitive psychology and linguistics indicate that acquisition of these various skills is not a linear process. In this view, all children come to school intellectually equipped to benefit from a range of learning activities, including tasks that reinforce basic skills while they develop more complex reasoning abilities. Thus, the focus on mechanics and memorization characteristic of traditional approaches to education for at-risk students may unintentionally limit these students' access to challenging learning opportunities. Indeed, studies of classroom instruction have revealed that low achieving students typically have less practice in advanced skills (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Oakes, 1985). Experts in various academic subject areas have investigated ways to integrate the teaching of lower-level and advanced skills in instruction for disadvantaged students, drawing on strengths that these children bring to school (e.g., Means & Knapp, 1991). This new direction is endorsed by groups such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), which has developed model curriculum standards for all students that de-emphasize repetitive drill and emphasize the goals of conceptual understanding and problem solving (NCTM, 1989). Several states have responded to this encouragement by developing curricular frameworks in different subject areas that draw on these recommendations (e.g., California Department of Education, 1990a, 1990b).

The new interest in raising intellectual expectations for disadvantaged students is reflected in a number of programmatic reform efforts as well. The shift in emphasis from mastery of basic skills to

more global learning strategies is evident in the models selected for examination in this study. While they focus on different grade levels and aspects of the schooling experience, all of the frameworks analyzed here reflect an assumption that disadvantaged students can learn more than was previously thought.

Progress has been made in both the theory and practice of schooling at-risk students. The history of school improvement efforts, however, indicates that effective school reform is not just a matter of good ideas. Successful implementation of these plans at the classroom level requires a thoughtful examination of the way change happens--or doesn't happen--in schools. We now turn to a brief review of school change lessons of the last few decades.

PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL REFORM

The Technical Perspective

There is no shortage of failures in the history of school improvement efforts. Many of these disappointing results provide important insights into the ways that schools and other organizations work. Until the 1970s, many reformers believed that the way to increase student achievement was to bring teacher behavior in line with tested and proven "best practice" of various kinds. School change, then, was viewed as a matter of reforming the individuals closest to the students--the teachers--primarily by providing them with access to better instructional techniques. Problems that arose in implementation were analyzed in terms of teacher "resistance," and reformers were interested in discovering how teachers could become more receptive to behavioral change. From researchers such as Lortie (1975), for example, we learned that teachers as a whole are largely conservative and defensive of the status quo.

According to Baldridge and Deal (1975), this approach was analogous to that taken in other organizational behavior studies. In this view, change in institutions is effected by manipulating the individuals within them. Models of the change process were drawn from innovations in fields such as agriculture and medicine; for example, research focused on the kind of farmer who would accept and

use advances in soil technology or characteristics of individuals seeking vaccinations. The recipients of new knowledge were generally viewed as independent of formal institutions.

Katz and Kahn (1975) refer to this earlier line of thinking as the "psychological fallacy." The focus on the individual rather than the organization as a whole led to the search for new and better technologies and effective ways to convince people to bring their behavior in line with improved knowledge about what works best.

The Implementation Perspective

A number of authors (e.g., Baldridge & Deal, 1975; Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, 1988) have noted the gradual shift from this individualistic bias to a more structural approach. A new interest emerged in the structure of institutions and the roles played by individual actors within them. House (1981) describes an analogous shift from a technical perspective on innovations to one that examines both the political and cultural aspects of organizations. Attention to the ways people behave in institutions cast new light on the difficulties encountered in changing individual actions within them. For example, Weatherley and Lipsky (1977) described the gap between mandated policy and practice as a function of the discretion exercised by "street-level bureaucrats" over their responsibilities. Specifically, they found that the necessary coping mechanisms used by individual school personnel to manage their various job demands significantly altered the implementation of special education reform. Further, examination of the structural characteristics of schools led to their characterization as "loosely-coupled" organizations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) in which teachers behind closed doors could be relatively autonomous and impervious to policy mandates. This transition in theoretical approach was reinforced by the burgeoning research on school change efforts. Perhaps the most ambitious attempt to examine implementation of promising strategies, the series of RAND volumes known as the "Change Agent Study," looked at the progress of several hundred federally funded projects and concluded:

> Despite considerable innovative activity on the part of local school districts, the evidence suggests that: No class of existing educational treatments has been found that consistently

> leads to improved student outcomes.... "Successful" projects have difficulty sustaining their success over a number of years.... [They] are not disseminated automatically or easily, and their "replication" in new sites usually falls short of their performance in the original sites (Berman & McLaughlin, 1981, 1-2).

One of the key findings of the RAND work emphasized the lack of uniformity in implementation approaches. Indeed, while the project had been designed to compare the effectiveness of particular intervention strategies, the study authors found more variation in implementation across classrooms within each model than among the different models themselves. The authors concluded that program replication was simply not occurring as planned, and they coined the term "mutual adaptation" to describe the interactive, reciprocal process between policy and practice that better characterizes innovation efforts. Berman (1981) further describes the change process as inevitably "implementation-dominant"--that events occurring after the adoption of the program determine the outcome, and these events cannot be predicted by the content of the technology itself.

The overriding importance of the local context thus emerged as a key determinant in the success of school reform efforts. Many of the findings of the original Change Agent study have been reinforced by the results of school improvement projects in the years since its original publication. In a recent review of the study's conclusions, McLaughlin (1990) seeks to correct some erroneous notions that have grown up around its finding--such as the idea that external agents cannot promote positive change--but note that many of its assertions are equally valid 12 years later. Those that have withstood the test of time especially well include: (1) Implementation dominates outcome; local choices have more influence than technology or design, and change continues to be a problem of the smallest unit. (2) Because of the determining effect of local capacity and will, policy "can't mandate what matters." (3) Local variability is the rule; uniformity is the exception (p. 12).

The implications of these conclusions for school change strategies are clear: policymakers must pay attention not only to program design but to the local setting as well. This entails an examination of the ways people live and work in organizations and requires willingness to learn from the school

context (e.g., Clune, 1990). The shift from change agent as dispenser of proven knowledge to a more explicitly reciprocal arrangement led in turn to a new interest in the culture of the school.

The Cultural Perspective

Sarason's (1971) analysis of incomplete school change efforts emphasized the importance of institutional norms and ways of operating--what he calls the "regularities" of schooling--in defeating ambitious innovations. Other authors (e.g., Fullan, 1982) have also underscored the centrality of teachers' own interpretations of the meaning of school change initiatives. However, the most widely publicized examination of the power of organizational culture came from outside education. The publication of Peters' and Waterman's In Search of Excellence (1981) brought new attention to this overlooked aspect of organizational life: the way people in institutions understand and interpret the meaning and significance of their work. Organization cultures are powerful and resilient; workers use symbols and stories to guide their actions and commitments. The good news is that cultures are dynamic as well as stable and thus are susceptible to transformations under appropriate circumstances. For many, understanding how school cultures evolve and change holds the key toward lasting school reform. This is especially true today when many school improvement efforts are more ambitious in scope and involve far more than the successful dissemination of instructional strategies.

Definitions of culture and theories about its development have varied over the last century and across disciplines. For our purposes, we draw from classical anthropology and define culture as the social legacy an individual acquires from a group: a way of thinking and interpreting the environment and a mechanism for the normative regulation of behavior. Put more simply, culture represents socially transmitted knowledge that provides a guide for action (Kluckholn, in Geertz, 1973).

Why does culture matter to investigations of school reform strategies? As Fullan (1982) notes, "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think--it's as simple and complex as that." An understanding of culture provides important clues to the shared understanding and beliefs of teachers--which in turn help us more accurately predict how various change initiatives might be received. Some reform initiatives, such as the introduction of new instructional materials, may conflict with existing

norms and goals. Those that ask more of teachers--reforms that require shifting priorities and changed attitudes--have a much better chance of success if they are introduced with a clear understanding of the normative setting. Sergiovanni (1989) argues on behalf of this perspective, noting that while schools are indeed loosely connected in a management sense, they are tightly connected in a cultural sense. Thus he warns that comprehensive reforms which ignore the cultural dimension are problematic:

> What matters most are the norms of the work group and the individuals' beliefs, values, patterns of socialization, convictions, and commitments. Management systems and related patterns of control, which are easily circumvented, are less important. The theories that often drive school improvement efforts are based on the opposite premise: They give too much attention to managerially oriented systems of control and not enough to the human factors associated with increased performance. (p. 2)

Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone (1989) examined three school improvement projects in the light of this perspective. They note that most school change literature looks at the political or technical reasons for failure without taking into account the fit between the desired behaviors and the culture's normative core--the accustomed ways of believing and behaving. In their view, "Successful change must either accommodate that core or engage in the difficult enterprise of reinterpreting, redefining, or reshaping it (p.18)."

Where there is strong consensus among staff members around certain central norms (e.g., high expectations for all students), the introduction of appropriate technology (e.g., a new set of instructional materials) to reach those goals may be well received. Thus not all reform efforts need address cultural change. As we will see in some of the case studies here, implementation may still depend on management expertise. In the most sweeping reforms--those that affect staff roles and responsibilities--culturally aware leadership becomes much more essential. We examine the important distinctions between management and leadership and their relationship to school culture and change in Chapter 2 of this report. The development of a more structural and cultural perspective on school organization does not make the technical view obsolete. As we will see, issues of knowledge and technique are still important in comprehensive school reform and particularly for the smaller scale

interventions examined in Chapter 2. Throughout the report, we will draw on insights from all three analytical frameworks to examine the key reform issues raised by the study sites.

From Implementation to Institutional Development

The three perspectives--technical, political, and cultural--are analytical frameworks that have themselves had ripple effects on school reform. The multiple failures of the technical, individualistic approach led to development of reform initiatives that explicitly allow for adaptation in the local setting. Examination of the cultural characteristics of the school context have in turn led to an examination of the meaning of change from the perspective of those directly involved in it. The evidence that emerges from this view provides a convincing case for the primacy of decisions made by those closest to students.

More and more, as the models discussed in Chapter 3 indicate, reform efforts are concentrating on ways to assist and empower these "street-level" decision makers. The pendulum has swung from an approach that tinkers with teachers as instructional deliverers to one in which policymakers and program developers facilitate rather than mandate.

Many reforms on the scene today thus no longer set successful implementation or replication as their ultimate goal. Rather than reduce variability across sites through specified behaviors or other constraints on teacher discretion, many policy researchers argue that the goal should be to allow practitioners to develop their own solutions and create organizations that foster and encourage reforms in practice (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988). Fullan (1990) characterizes this as a shift from the implementation perspective to a focus on institutional development. In his view, the desirable endpoint is a setting in which teachers have a "generic capacity to learn" (p. 17), where there is an ethic of continuous improvement.

The frameworks we analyze in Chapter 3 derive from this reasoning. As we will see, the road is a long one, and progress is not easily measured in traditional ways.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

The analyses that follow examine the following programs:

- Reading Recovery, an intensive reading program for first graders, based on years of successful research and practice in New Zealand. The program is a highly individualized tutoring system that relies on extended teacher training in diagnostic procedures, authentic assessment, and independent learning strategies. The program's center in the U.S. is Ohio State University, which for several years has been training staff to work at schools nationwide.

- Success for All, developed by Robert Slavin at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. This is a schoolwide (K-5) reform intended to redesign remedial services and special education. A number of instructional strategies (e.g., tutoring, cooperative learning) are used, with resources concentrated at the early grades, to ensure that no student falls behind grade level in basic skills. The original pilot site is in Baltimore; there are now replications in more than a dozen schools.

- The Academy Model, a high school dropout-prevention program that combines academic preparation and workplace training in a school-within-a-school design. The original site is in Philadelphia; there are many replications, including the California Peninsula Academies.

- The Accelerated Schools Project, developed by Henry Levin at Stanford University. This schoolwide effort involves an accelerated curriculum that emphasizes challenging and exciting learning activities for students who normally are identified for drill-and-practice remediation. Project schools are governed by teacher and parent cadres. Many elementary and some secondary schools nationwide have adopted this program, including sites in California, Missouri, and Illinois.

- The School Development Program, developed by James Comer at the Yale Child Study Center. Also known as the "Comer Process," this is a comprehensive, schoolwide approach to school organization and management based on principles of child development and the importance of parent involvement. The program originated at two elementary schools in New Haven and is currently operating in over 100 sites nationwide. In 1990-91 it expanded into 12 pilot sites at the middle school level.

- School-based management projects, a broad category that includes a range of organizational restructuring initiatives. These reform efforts may involve both changes in school governance systems (including enhanced decisionmaking roles for teachers and parents) and in the organization of the curriculum. Examples of sites that have recently established this type of decentralized authority include Dade County (Florida), Rochester (New York), Massachusetts' Carnegie Schools, and Colorado's "Creativity Schools."

Site Selection and Methods

Table 1 presents the general characteristics of each model. In all cases where a pilot or founding site was available, we included it in our sample. In collaboration with Department of

Education personnel, we selected an additional site to visit for each framework. We relied on recommendations by district personnel, program developers, and published data to ascertain that these sites were promising examples of each model. Table 2 provides an overview of the size, scope, and location of the individual programs studied.

We first reviewed the literature on these program frameworks. After obtaining agreement to participate from the sites, we made arrangements to visit the school or schools in the spring of 1991. Two-person teams of experienced field researchers stayed on site for two to three days. We were particularly interested in gathering information from a variety of respondents in each case, all of whom were affected by the reform initiative in some way. Due to the wide difference in scope and focus of the six programs, the identity of those interviewed varied from setting to setting. In some cases observations and interviews were focused on one school and the appropriate district personnel; in others we visited more than one school. For some programs we spent most of our time observing instruction, while in others we attended cadre meetings or staff training sessions. We worked with semistructured interview protocols tailored to each site.

In addition to interviews and observations, we reviewed all available documents, including any internal and external evaluations at each site. Because many of these projects are quite new, in some cases these data are incomplete. Particularly for the more comprehensive, schoolwide initiatives, it is simply too early to determine whether the reforms will have clear effects on traditional measures such as student test scores. In these cases, we looked more carefully at what researchers believe to be potential prior conditions for change in student achievement levels: the development of teacher knowledge, attitudes, and involvement in decision making.

Table 1
Approaches to School Reform

Framework	Grade Level and Scope	Goals	Key Features	Underlying Principles
Reading Recovery	•1st Grade •Students with reading problems	•To develop independent reading skills and the strategies good readers use	•Individualized, daily, 30-minute lessons in reading and writing •Extensive staff development	•Early intervention •Reading instruction should stress meaning, not phonics skills •Individualized assistance can be cost-effective
Success for All	•Originally prekindergarten to grade 3, recently expanded to grades 4 and 5 •All students	•To bring students to grade level proficiency	•Small reading groups arranged according to performance level •Individual tutoring as needed •A Family Support Team (including social workers) to promote parent involvement and non-academic child development	•Early intervention •Instruction for young children should concentrate on basic skills •Interventions should be research-based and comprehensive
High School Business/ Financial Services Academies	•High school •Students identified as at-risk	•To reduce dropout rates •To foster vocational skills	•School-within-a-school with separate staff •Vocational focus integrated with academic training	•Academics appear more relevant to at-risk students when tied to the world of work, particularly through vocational training •Students learn best in environments that foster a sense of identity and community
The Accelerated Schools Project	•Originally elementary grades, recently expanded to middle grades •All students/staff	•To bring students to grade level proficiency •To instill self-esteem and an appreciation for learning	•Shared decision-making and goal-setting •Heterogeneous classes emphasizing higher order thinking skills	•At-risk students need acceleration, not remediation •A unified commitment by the entire school community is essential for restructured schools
The School Development Program (Comer Process)	•Originally elementary grades, recently expanded to middle grades •All students/staff	•To improve school climate by increasing staff and community involvement •To base policies on principles of child development	•School management team composed of parents, teachers, administrators, and school support staff •Mental Health Team with input in setting school policy •Emphasis on parent involvement	•School personnel must work collaboratively with one another, parents, and members of the community •Schools should be more sensitive to students' individual needs, including social, cultural, and psychological needs
School-based Management	•All grade levels •All students/staff	•To give decision-making authority to building-level staff	•Shared decision-making governs day-to-day management •Staff plan and implement all aspects of reform	•Decision-making should reside with the people who are most familiar with students' needs and interests •School reform cannot succeed without collaboration of teachers

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Table 2
Program Sites

Site	Framework Implemented	School Year When Framework Initially Implemented at Site	National Pilot Program for Framework?	Number of Pupils Involved 1989-90	Number of Schools Implementing in District as of September 1990	Setting
Columbus Public School District	Reading Recovery	1984-85	Yes	340	36	Urban, Midwest
Tucson Unified School District	Reading Recovery	1988-89	No	86	20	Urban, Southwest
Cedar Hills Elementary School	Success for All	1988-89	No	484	1	Urban, Mid-Atlantic
Armstrong Elementary School	Success for All	1987-88	Yes	564	1	Urban, Mid-Atlantic
Franklin Elementary School	Success for All	1989-90	No	665	1	Urban, Southeast
Portland Financial Services Academy	The Academy Model	1984-85	No	100 approx.	1	Urban, West Coast
Philadelphia High School Business Academies (2 programs)	The Academy Model	1969-70	Yes	240 approx.	9	Urban, Mid-Atlantic
Jefferson Elementary School	Accelerated Schools Project	1987-88	Yes	344	1	Urban, West Coast
Madison Elementary School	Accelerated Schools Project	1989-90	No	201	1	Rural, Midwest
New Haven Public Schools	The Comer Process	1968-69	Yes	14,400 approx.	35	Urban, Northeast
Prince George's County Public Schools	The Comer Process	1985-86	No	24,750 approx.	40	Urban, Mid-Atlantic
Sante Fe Public Schools	School-Based Management	1987-88	N/A[1]	12,400 approx.	25	Rural, Southwest
Dade County Public Schools	School-Based Management	1987-88	N/A	150,000 approx.	150	Urban, Southeast

[1] Unlike the other frameworks examined here, school-based management does not reflect one nationally-disseminated model for which a pilot program was created.

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OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

This study analyzes school reform efforts that differ widely in scope and intent; in some cases, the target population--at-risk students--is the only characteristic they have in common. To facilitate analysis of this broad range of initiatives, we have divided the reforms into two groups.

Chapter 2 discusses the three programs that explicitly target curriculum and instruction--Reading Recovery, Success for All, and the Academy model. These projects primarily address what Cuban (1989) characterizes as "first-order" changes. Such efforts focus on issues that correspond to what engineers consider problems of quality control: they assume that basic organizational structures and goals are sound, and change is necessary to correct defects. Although there are significant differences among them, all three programs in Chapter 2 focus directly on changes in student achievement, whether in literacy or employability skills. While they all work within the structure of the existing schools and do not require broad changes in organization or governance, they do differ significantly in what they ask and expect of teachers.

The programs reviewed in Chapter 3 seek to effect what Cuban (1989) calls "second-order" changes--those that an engineer would call solutions to design problems. These reforms involve changing the vision of what an institution ought to be, a process which may fundamentally alter roles, routines, and relationships within schools. The programs in Chapter 3--Accelerated Schools, Comer Process, and school-based management--also are interested to varying degrees in changes in classroom practice, but they approach instructional reform through a reorganization of the traditional school structure. In all cases more authority is given to teachers; in some cases parents are called in as partners as well. These projects thus attempt both first- and second-order changes.

Both chapters begin with brief profiles of the program models under review. For detailed case studies of the individual sites, the reader is referred to Volume II of this report.

Limitations of the Study

The profiles provided here are not meant to be evaluations of either the model frameworks or of individual schools. While we tried to gain a complete picture of the program at each site, we claim no generalizability beyond the sites we observed. Readers are cautioned that the report does not pretend to judge which of these programs is best.

We do believe, however, that we have uncovered some important clues about what makes school reform efforts more successful, which we hope will prove useful to policymakers and practitioners alike. Fullan (1982) notes that "real change, whether desired or not, whether imposed or voluntarily pursued, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty." In our visits to these schools we observed a number of creative and varied reactions to this experience, responses that we believe can be instructive to present and future reformers.

CHAPTER 2

CURRICULUM-BASED REFORMS

1. READING RECOVERY

Overview

Reading Recovery is an individualized early intervention program for first grade students, designed to promote good reading by teaching reading strategies before a pattern of failure develops. Reading Recovery encourages accelerated progress and is not designed to be a long-term or remedial program. It is based on the work of New Zealand educator and child psychologist Marie Clay. Reading Recovery's goals are accomplished through individual tutoring sessions designed to: (1) bring children who are at risk of reading failure up to the average of their class within a short time, so that they can profit from ongoing classroom instruction, and (2) help these children develop a self-improving system for continued growth in reading without additional help.

Content and Instructional Strategies

Reading Recovery is an intensive program in which teachers work individually with students for 30 minutes daily. The lessons focus on critical thinking skills derived from observations of how experts read. There is no manual to follow; rather, teachers create individual lessons to suit each child's interests and abilities.

The first two weeks of the program, called "Roaming Around the Known," allow the teacher and student to explore reading and writing together. Based on a Diagnostic Survey that tests various reading skills (letter identification, high-frequency words, concepts about print, writing/vocabulary, dictation, and text level), these lessons focus on what students are able to do, thus building confidence and a good working relationship.

After Roaming Around the Known, Reading Recovery lessons follow a structured sequence of reading and writing activities. During the lesson the teacher keeps detailed records of the student's progress, including a running record of the day's book attempted independently, with analysis of accuracy level and self correction rate. Throughout, the emphasis is on developing strategies for learning and getting at information by using all available context clues. For example, students are constantly urged to check their own reading by asking: "Does it look right? Does it sound right? Does it make sense?"

The program does not have a fixed time span or sequence of activities. Students "discontinue" from the program when they reach the average ability of their class and the teacher feels that they have developed and use self-monitoring activities.

Materials and Staff Development

A list of recommended little books organized into 20 reading levels serves as a resource guide for teachers. Teachers select books based on their ongoing diagnosis of the child's repertoire of reading strategies.

Because of the intensity of the tutoring system, Reading Recovery teachers usually teach only four or five students in one day. For the rest of the day, they continue with regular classroom teaching and other school-related obligations.

First-year Reading Recovery teachers participate in weekly training classes, and at least three times a year they provide "behind-the-glass" lessons, conducting a session with a student behind a one-way mirror while other teachers-in-training examine and discuss the techniques employed. In subsequent years, training is less intensive. Teacher leaders design and implement the training at each site, provide technical assistance, and ensure program quality. Ohio State University plays a central role in the program; they coordinate activities across the country, serve as consultants to local sites, and train teacher-leaders, either in Ohio or in one of several regional centers.

Outcomes

Ohio State University collects and analyzes data from Reading Recovery sites nationwide. The program is very successful with most of its students. In Columbus during 1989-1990, for example, 240 out of 340 students were discontinued from the program, most after 16 to 20 weeks of lessons. Over 92 percent of these students equalled or exceeded the average reading score of their class. Other sites show similar evidence of impact.

Sites Visited for This Study

We visited Ohio State University, where the U.S. version of the program was developed, and observed its implementation in the Columbus City Schools. We also went to Tucson, Arizona, where Reading Recovery is one of the strategies used districtwide in Chapter 1 instruction.

2. SUCCESS FOR ALL

Overview

The philosophy of Success for All (SFA) was derived from research findings that show that children who experience academic failure in their formative school years--particularly those who have been retained in grade or have poorly developed reading skills--are severely at risk of dropping out. Responding to this evidence, Robert Slavin and others at Johns Hopkins University developed a program intended to ensure that by the end of third grade every child would have the tools necessary to be successful in school.

Success for All attempts to guarantee grade-level proficiency through a number of program components that provide academic, social, emotional, and health support systems. Specifically, the complete SFA includes comprehensive reading and math programs targeted to small, homogeneous ability groups; opportunities for one-on-one reading and math tutoring; reading assessments every eight weeks; preschool and full-day kindergarten instruction; a Family Support team; a program facilitator; pre- and inservice teacher training sessions; and an advisory committee.

Content and Instructional Strategies

Success for All's reading program consists of certified teachers working with small, multi-age groups of between 15 and 17 students in daily 90-minute reading sessions. Except in kindergarten, the reading groups are arranged according to reading performance levels rather than by age and grade.

SFA emphasizes basic oral language skills in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade with the Story Telling and Retelling (STaR) program and the Peabody Language Development Program series. Once students are ready to begin reading--usually sometime during kindergarten or the beginning of first grade--they work on learning the sounds and symbols of the alphabet. Eventually, K-1 students move into the Hopkins-designed "Beginning Reading" program, in which they read from phonetically regular minibooks.

Students who have reached the 2-1 Reading level move to the SFA "Beyond the Basics" program, a cooperative learning arrangement structured around the district's basal series. Students also do partner reading and answer questions from Hopkins-designed, workbook-like "Treasure Hunts."

The Hopkins SFA math component, called the Team Accelerated Instruction (TAI) program, is offered to students in grades 3-5. The essential elements of the program include direct instruction, cooperative learning, and a variety of workbook-based tasks and activities.

The Hopkins SFA team regards reading and math tutoring as one of the central features of the program. Tutors, who are certified teachers, provide daily individualized 20-minute sessions for students needing additional remedial instruction. Assessments every 8 weeks indicate whether a student needs tutoring services, should be moved to another reading group, or needs other types of services, such as family intervention or vision/hearing testing.

Materials and Staff Development

Johns Hopkins has materials available for sale for most of the program components; some are specially designed to work with published textbooks. Teachers follow detailed manuals for most activities.

Teachers receive two to three days of instructional training in reading and math at the beginning of each school year. Further inservice sessions are provided throughout the year to help teachers with classroom management, instructional pace, and cooperative learning techniques. In addition, all preschool and kindergarten teachers receive training in using the STaR and Peabody programs. Tutors receive an additional day of training on tutoring strategies and reading assessment.

Outcomes

Implementation of the SFA model varies from site to site; most sites have cut costs by eliminating certain components, or have adapted the program to their own needs. According to SFA's own evaluations, the pilot schools in Baltimore have succeeded in getting about 80 percent of their students on grade level by the third grade. Test score results in other sites have been mixed. SFA schools often do report positive outcomes with raising student attendance, reducing retention rates, and increasing the level of parent involvement.

Sites Visited for This Study

We visited two of the pilot schools in Baltimore that were implementing the full multi-component, "Cadillac" version of SFA. In Charleston, South Carolina, we observed a "Chevy" model, where funding constraints had eliminated the Family Support Team and the prekindergarten. In addition, the tutoring component was modified and the principal decided to continue the pre-SFA math program.

3. HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIES

Overview

The High School Academies are alternatives to the standard organization of schooling in American secondary education. They offer a combination of basic academic training, training in basic employability skills, orientation and training for specific occupational areas, and individualized attention to at-risk youth.

While details of program components vary across sites, most Academies include the following characteristics in their definitions of the model: (1) support from local business or public sector employers; (2) a school-within-a-school organizational structure that includes block rostering (i.e., scheduling) of students and a team faculty arrangement; (3) a curriculum that integrates academic content, employability training, job skills, and general enrichment; (4) a selection process that identifies at-risk students with academic potential and a commitment to the occupational area of the academy (e.g., business, health, computer science); (5) clearly defined rules understood by students, parents, teachers, and administrators; (6) paid work experience for qualified students; and (7) school and district support for the program, including adequate preparation time for teachers.

Content and Instructional Strategies

Each Academy has a coordinator who has responsibility for the daily operations of the program. Students are block rostered (i.e., scheduled as a team) to ensure that they take as many courses as possible together. The assumption is that students will get to know each other and will coalesce as a group as they continue through school. Teachers are organized as teams within the school faculties. They have a common planning period each day. Academies usually have the extra personnel required to reduce class size to 15 to 20 students per class.

The Academies concentrate on developing a variety of basic employability skills. In language instruction, the emphasis is on writing and speaking. In mathematics, it is on basic computational skills. The vocational component emphasizes office clerical skills, with attention to keyboarding, word processing, and basic bookkeeping and accounting. The Academies also devote considerable attention to job search skills. Students visit firms to learn about job responsibilities; they prepare resumes, practice interviews, and actually go through the interview process as part of the work experience. Finally, the Academies' emphasis on attendance, punctuality, deportment, and appearance completes the focus on skills and attitudes that prepare students for entry level positions in business. The courses included in the curriculum meet high school graduation requirements, but they are not the ones normally taken by college-bound students.

All students in the Academy are assigned a mentor, usually a volunteer from the business community, and get work experience either in the summer or during their senior year. Students' performance in their job placement is monitored by the Academy staff.

In addition, Academies require substantial involvement and support from private businesses. While private seed money is often necessary to establish the Academies, long-term industry support is far more important to the program's success than start-up funds. Participating businesses are asked to provide the following types of assistance: (1) sharing in decisionmaking authority with district personnel and serving on major policymaking committees; (2) designating corporate employees who may assist Academy staff, at company expense, in designing appropriate curricula; (3) offering students part-time or summer jobs; (4) sponsoring the mentor program; and (5) serving as hosts for field trips to supplement students' in-class learning.

Materials and Staff Development

Curriculum offerings differ across Academy sites; there are no standard materials. The model includes a strong emphasis on the integration of academic and vocational skills in the classroom. A great deal of staff development is required in order to create challenging, integrated curriculum, and not all sites are able to provide extensive teacher training. Teachers do use the common planning period to discuss instructional approaches and the needs of particular students.

Outcomes

Evaluations of the fully implemented Academy model reveal that it has the potential to improve the attendance, academic performance, and employability of at-risk high school students. However, the efforts made throughout the country to replicate the model have met with mixed results. Schools are not always able to secure the expertise, funding, time, and employment opportunities that private businesses must give to Academies. The goal of integrating vocational and academic skills in a meaningful way through the design of innovative curriculum has not always been realized.

Sites Visited in This Study

Various types of Academies now exist in dozens of locations around the country; this report refers to only two sites. We visited two Business Academies in Philadelphia, where the program was developed over twenty years ago, and a newer Financial Services Academy in Oregon.

DISCUSSION

In this section, we review the models summarized in the preceding three profiles. Although Reading Recovery, Success for All, and the Academy model are very different approaches to school reform for youth at risk of school failure, they share a focus on change in curriculum and instruction within the present school organization. Here we seek to compare and contrast the different models as they are found in practice on key dimensions such as adoption, design, implementation, and outcomes. Finally, we turn to an analysis of the implications for more general aspects of school reform.

Program Adoption

Marketing and dissemination. Reading Recovery and the Academy model are well known to their specific constituencies--primary reading specialists and the secondary school dropout-prevention community, respectively--and there is no aggressive marketing of either model. Typically, key individuals from a district visit one of the better known examples of each model and then lobby the district to obtain funding.

Success for All has had a great deal of exposure in periodicals and books, but the researchers at Hopkins do not aggressively seek out host sites. At present, the model requires significant resources, with the establishment of a schoolwide Chapter 1 program (at least 75 percent poverty population) as the minimum. So far, it appears that Success for All sites have had previous relationships with Johns Hopkins that make the decision to adopt the program a logical one.

The sites we visited for all programs were satisfied with the truth in advertising exhibited by all disseminators; no one reported having unrealistic expectations. There were no unpleasant surprises, and the sites were accurately informed of what would be involved in the various interventions.

Pre-implementation preparation. All three programs require two key events to occur before getting started: (1) obtaining reliable and sufficient funding from the district, and (2) hiring a coordinator to supervise planning and training and to negotiate with the principal and school staff.

Amount of staff consensus. Because both Reading Recovery and the Academy models target specific populations within the school, only those staff directly involved need to sign on initially. In all cases, however, it is better to bring the rest of the school on board to support the effort, in order to improve coordination between the projects and the regular academic program. In addition, both programs have the potential to elicit resentment from regular teaching staff if their support is not garnered early on. For example, Reading Recovery and Academy teachers all have a smaller number of students than their colleagues, and school morale may suffer if the benefits to all are not clear.

Success for All involves all teachers in the school from pre-K to fifth grade, and the Hopkins developers want to ensure that a majority (75 percent) of the teachers approve of the process before they agree to accept the site into the program.

Systemic change required. Unlike the projects reviewed in Chapter 3, these three programs require very little other than funding support from the host districts and can operate relatively autonomously. They do not need to be systemwide initiatives, and a district could feasibly select one of these interventions as a pilot project in a single school. While there may be complex administrative hurdles (block rostering in the Academy model, the creation of cross-age ability groups in Success for All), these were not considered disruptive by school staff.

The facilitators in each of the programs have important roles as planners and supervisors, but they have no formal authority. The governance structures of the programs are essentially independent of the regular school hierarchy, making political conflict unlikely.

Program Design

Program philosophy. Reading Recovery and Success for All are based on the belief that early intervention is crucial for disadvantaged students. Both programs draw on an extensive research base to inform practice but differ in the kind of evidence used. The multiple components of Success for All have been selected from the developers' "best-evidence synthesis" of remedial and compensatory education programs, with a focus on basic skills acquisition. Reading Recovery researchers took a different approach: they explored the strategies that expert readers normally use and created a system of coaching and questioning to develop those same habits in early readers. Given their different origins, it is not surprising that the Success for All early reading materials are phonics-based, while Reading Recovery emphasizes word sounds in the context of teaching primarily for meaning.

The two primary grade program developers believe that they can improve instruction without confronting the difficult prospect of structural change in the school. Their approaches to working within

the present institutions differ, however; Reading Recovery puts the teacher at the center of the change efforts while Success for All places more emphasis on carefully sequenced materials.

The Academy model is designed for older students; its primary goal is keeping students in school and developing employability skills. The model approaches this task by creating a smaller, more manageable environment that emphasizes personal relationships with adults and successful academic experiences. This involves changing the organizational structure of the school for this group of target students and connecting school as much as possible to the outside world through work experience and mentorship.

Target population. All of these programs are unquestionably centered on the student. Program objectives in all three cases are clearly stated in terms of student performance. While both Reading Recovery and the Academy appear to change the working conditions of teachers in important ways--particularly in the collaboration component of both models--staff development itself is not the primary goal in any of the three cases.

Decisionmaking processes. Success for All is a good example of a more traditional approach to instructional change: the program and materials are designed by specialists and researchers who train teachers to use them. In this sense, all programmatic decisions are made by the developers. In Reading Recovery, the staff training, which continues throughout the life of the program, gives teachers a foundation in research in literacy acquisition, and then provides them with practice in making their own decisions based on this expertise.

In the Academy sites we visited, the extra hour of planning time created an opportunity for teachers to work together. It was not clear, however, that staff used this time to make decisions about curriculum and instruction; rather, teachers typically discuss individual student problems.

Emphasis on process vs. content. All of these programs are focused on content; there is a specified curriculum and instructional objectives in each (literacy skills, high school completion, and job placement). In other words, all of these models envision an ideal situation in which certain specified activities occur. To some degree, all three programs also emphasize changes in instructional process

as a way of achieving these goals. Success for All, for example, uses cooperative team learning as a tool to teach basic skills to mixed groups of students. The questioning process in Reading Recovery is the centerpiece of its approach to literacy learning.

Materials vs. staff development. Success for All is highly dependent on the use of prescribed materials, some of them scripted. Reading Recovery is at the opposite end of the continuum: no materials are provided with the program, and teachers and the facilitator constantly add books to their collection. Teachers then choose among the books based on students' strengths and weaknesses. Instruction in the Academy classrooms is based on a traditional vocational education and business skills curriculum. The classrooms we visited did not emphasize the integration of academic and vocational skills; the lack of ongoing staff development may account for this missing element of the model.

Implementation Issues

Importance of key actors. The program facilitators are the key personnel in all three models. Because they are all adjuncts to the regular school operations and have no enforcement authority, they provide the crucial guidance and technical assistance for the daily workings of each reform effort. In general, principals are largely peripheral; they can provide invaluable support and encouragement, and in all cases they were very enthusiastic about the programs and appreciative of the facilitators' efforts. In theory, building principals could stand in the way of effective program implementation, but in practice they do not. District administrators also have much to gain and little to lose by not interfering with smooth program operation.

The program facilitators need good management skills, including the coping ability necessary to handle personnel and daily maintenance issues. Because cultural change--as described in Chapter 1 of this report--is typically unnecessary in these interventions, charismatic leadership is a plus, but it is not required. Good program facilitators are excellent negotiators and mediators of the various school constituencies.

Amount of staff consensus required. As might be expected from these program configurations, only the staff directly involved with the program need to enthusiastically support the effort. In essence, these programs can operate in isolation from the rest of the school, although this is not the optimal situation. Gains made by targeted students are more easily sustained when all staff are committed to a common vision. A dissenting faction within the school but outside the group does not present any direct danger to program operations.

In Success for All, the upper elementary grade teachers need to be supportive of the program even though they may not be directly involved. This is especially the case since their instructional strategies are usually analogous to the SFA approaches (e.g., cooperative learning). While Reading Recovery can run smoothly without coordination with classroom teachers, there was some evidence that similar perspectives on literacy learning between Reading Recovery teachers and others can potentially strengthen the program's positive impact.

Similarly, while the Academy is a small family, its connection with the rest of the school is not irrelevant. In addition, the consensus within the Academy team is extremely important, since it is so small. The various teachers on the Academy team need to agree on general principles, such as grading and discipline issues.

Effects of school and district context. Other than the significant investment of funds required for materials, staff salaries, and training, the district role is minimal. In some cases, flexibility in requirements may be helpful. In the South Carolina Success for All school, for example, the state compensatory education targeting system required that tutored students be identified and served for a full year, a design that contradicts the need-based approach central to the program.

Local conditions and program fit. The programs do not require strong vertical or horizontal linkages among the staff and between staff and administrators. Even the Academy, the only program structured around a team arrangement, can probably function without a strong collaborative culture. Similarly, the goals and objectives of all three reform efforts are not likely to interfere with individual

schools' sense of mission. Pre-existing tensions or factions among staff or administrators are not likely to be exacerbated by these interventions, unlike restructuring efforts where collegiality is essential.

In general, Reading Recovery, Success for All, and the Academy are feasible interventions in a variety of different contexts, with a minimum of prerequisites needed to achieve a fit.

Internal and external assistance. As in all programs designed to stimulate behavioral change, these three programs would all show marked benefits from ongoing staff development. Nonetheless, the Academy functions well in its primary objective--school completion--without it. Success for All depends on staff development for maintenance and progress, and teachers who do not receive assistance and monitoring may return to older, more comfortable habits. Reading Recovery requires regular participation in training sessions as long as teachers remain with the program.

In all cases, the facilitators are the key mediators of assistance. It is they who communicate with the program developers if circumstances warrant and who patch up a variety of daily problems.

Evolution over time. In all three cases, the programs tend to drift back to more traditional practice in the absence of close supervision. However, this is particularly unlikely in Reading Recovery, where monitoring and feedback are expressly structured into the system at regular intervals. The Academy's intent to integrate academic and vocational skills has not been realized in the sites we visited, and the result has been the return to a more traditional vocational curriculum. One of the Success for All schools visited had returned to its pre-SFA arrangement for student grouping.

In all reform efforts, barriers and unexpected problems occur from time to time. Because of its close supervision and limited scope, Reading Recovery has perhaps the most stable environmental context. Variations in student demographics sometimes call for creative responses, however, and Reading Recovery in Tucson met this challenge when the program was redesigned to meet the needs of the large Hispanic population.

The Academy model has shifted its target population to some degree over the years. In one site, for example, we were told of the decision to pursue a better mix of students so that role models would be available within the program for the less motivated students. In practice, this means that the

program has become more selective and does not appear to be serving the most at-risk students in the respective schools.

"Disabled" versions--what gets left out. Omissions from original program design are typically the result of local resource constraints. The "Chevy" version of the Success for All model functions without several key components of the "Cadillac" model, including the Family Support Team and the preschool. The Academy model is dependent on active business support--which is less well established in the Oregon site--and a job market that provides places for those with entry level skills. At the sites we visited, we saw no evidence of missing components in the Reading Recovery program.

Program costs. Of the three types of interventions, the Academy requires the least new financial investment: the salary of the coordinator who supervises teachers and obtains business participation, and FTEs to cover the cost of a common planning period and the resulting reduced student load. Both Reading Recovery and Success for All are relatively expensive. In Reading Recovery, the teachers serve only a few students over the course of the year, while the cost of materials for Success for All is probably prohibitive for schools that lack a large allocation of Chapter 1 funds. Precise cost estimates are unreliable, since resource requirements depend on such program-specific choices as the amount of staff development and arrangements for planning time and smaller classes.

RESULTS

Quality of implementation and institutionalization. None of the sites we visited had major problems implementing these programs. All had achieved at least some degree of institutionalization: they are accepted, routine parts of their respective organizations.

The relative ease of implementation of these programs is explained by many of the factors described above. Reading Recovery offers teachers who are highly committed to their craft the opportunity to enhance their skills. Success for All is somewhat more intrusive in what it imposes on classrooms teachers, but many seem to welcome its patterned, prescribed system. If teachers object

to it or prefer other methods, there are few sanctions. The Academy offers a rare commodity in today's schools--more time for teachers to plan and to get to know students, without requiring more from them in return. In short, all of these programs tend to gain converts in practice.

Impact on users (teachers, administrators). Most of the staff involved with these programs have changed their behavior at least to the extent required; for example, most Success for All primary teachers have substituted the Hopkins worksheets and teacher manual for those provided by the basal publisher. As we have seen, little attitudinal change is necessary among administrators or nonparticipating staff in order for the programs to flourish.

While we saw no conflicts between teacher perspectives and stated program goals, this does not mean that they might not occur. It is possible to imagine situations, for example, in which teachers who are strong believers in the value of phonics drill would not thrive in a Reading Recovery format, any more than those committed to a whole language approach would feel comfortable with the scripted lessons of Success for All.

Impact on students. All three programs have their own data on student performance in the form of test scores or completion rates, and all have shown a positive impact in the desired direction. In the case of Success for All, which uses the phonics-based Woodcock-Durrell battery, these data do not always match the district's standardized test results; nevertheless, the developers believe that they have come close to meeting their stated objective of bringing all students to grade level by third grade. The Academies' graduation rates are higher than might be expected for their population, and the discontinuing rate for Reading Recovery is very high.

Among the plausible explanations for these positive outcomes is the fact that students in these programs simply receive more time and attention from teachers. In the Cadillac version of Success for All, children have both a preschool and a full-day academic kindergarten, which alone can account for achievement differences in basic skills. The Family Support Team is expressly designed to focus on individual needs. The 30 minutes a day of intensive interaction in Reading Recovery is explicitly directed to encouraging independence, thus providing the first successful learning experience for many

of these children. The Academy students have teachers who know them well, not just in their own classes: the teachers are often aware of their progress in other classes and in work experiences as well. The students' sense that they matter to someone was well articulated to us during our visits.

Problems in evaluation and accountability. Unlike the reform efforts reviewed in Chapter 3, these programs have highly specific, measurable goals. Even in these relatively straightforward cases, however, questions remain about which treatment components are most responsible for success. It is difficult to measure, for example, the independent effects of program components such as cooperative learning or tutoring in Success for All. It is also unclear in the Academy whether mentoring, block rostering, work experience, or selective recruitment account for its record of retaining students to graduation.

Factors outside of the programs may also constrain their successes. The Academy model is dependent on opportunities in the local job market. The effects of Reading Recovery may be attenuated by conflicting instructional methods in the regular classroom.

LESSONS FOR SCHOOL REFORM

If well-planned and monitored, interventions in curriculum and instruction such as these are likely to be implemented without much disruption to the host school. Because these approaches do not attempt fundamental alterations in school structure, they are usually able to achieve results within the range of their particular focus without provoking resistance from school personnel. In all cases, instructional arrangements suggested by these models are not likely to collide with teachers' pre-established conceptions of what it means to do their job well.

All of these programs are run by facilitators, who need to be expert managers; they do not necessarily need to be inspiring leaders. Because they do not attempt structural or cultural change in the school--and because they are implementing programs that have already been designed elsewhere--they need coping skills more than they need to be visionaries. While this distinction may be less than concrete (in practice there is, of course, a great deal of overlap), it receives significant attention in the

management literature and is instructive for our purposes here. Louis and Miles (1990) explain the important difference as follows:

> The terms are both complementary and distinctive: Leaders set the course for the organization; managers make sure the course is followed. Leaders make strategic plans; managers design operational systems for carrying out the plans. Leaders stimulate and inspire; managers use their interpersonal influence and authority to translate that energy into productive work (p. 20).

We do not mean to imply that the presence of an effective leader is superfluous. Indeed, we saw many good leaders among the facilitators and coordinators of these programs. It does mean that because many of the features of these programs sell themselves to staff during the process of implementation, in a sense much of the battle is already won, and daily maintenance and supervision are more important than the motivation supplied by a charismatic leader.

Louis and Miles describe two key obligations of an expert change manager, and both are relevant to the three programs here. First, effective managers negotiate the program's relationship with its environment. In other words, they must (1) be proactive in obtaining potential resources; (2) think of assistance, training, and support as a master resource; (3) think very broadly about resources in terms of time, people, material, and existing equipment in addition to dollars; and (4) take an active buffering stance in relation to the school or district. Second, expert managers need to have well developed coping skills: the ability to coordinate and orchestrate the evolution of the program in the school through long-term approaches rather than merely fire-fighting gestures.

To allow the successful implementation of these programs, good facilitators need to be all of these things to some degree. However, a structural impediment to the smooth operation of even these small-scale intervention remains: none of the facilitators have any real authority to enforce behavior. They have no rewards or sanctions at their disposal, and thus any evaluations that they carry out are advisory only.

This is not a problem for those aspects of the programs that are self-reinforcing. Reading Recovery teachers are typically self-selected and eagerly submit themselves to scrutiny by their colleagues. Some aspects of the Academy model are particularly appealing to teachers, such as the added planning period. In Success for All, new teachers in particular may welcome materials that

require them to make fewer instructional decisions. In these examples, none of the program components requires close supervision to establish and maintain it. Other more problematic strategies are less likely to be faithfully employed without assistance and monitoring. The cooperative learning component of Success for All is difficult for inexperienced teachers and requires changing many instructional habits. In the absence of ongoing technical assistance, supervision without "muscle" is typically incapable of maintaining the process as intended.

Schools or districts looking for innovative approaches to addressing the educational problems of youth at risk might well consider any of these approaches. They are relatively limited in scope--especially in comparison to those reviewed in Chapter 3--but they have noticeable, nearly immediate results. They are nonintrusive and quite achievable.

It is important to note, however, that they are not "teacher-proof." The quality of the teachers involved still determines the programs' impact on students. The research on school change in recent decades has reached something of a consensus on attempts to reduce variability at the level of the classroom: it doesn't work well for long. Elmore and McLaughlin (1988) suggest that a major lesson learned from past reforms concerns the folly of attempting to reduce teacher discretion. In their view, effective reforms charge practitioners with the development of solutions, accommodate variability, and create organizations that foster and encourage reforms in practice. Fullan (1990) suggests that reforms should aim to increase the organization's capacity to make continuous improvements.

In their own small ways, Reading Recovery and the Academy do attempt to enhance and support this process by providing time for collaboration. Indeed, these programs still confer a great deal of autonomy on the teacher in making decisions about what is best for individual students. Success for All is the only one that does not include a structural component providing opportunities for teachers to develop solutions and become better learners themselves. The prescribed materials may have the effect of reducing rather than enhancing professional growth opportunities, and this is unfortunate.

CHAPTER 3

GOVERNANCE-BASED REFORMS

1. ACCELERATED SCHOOLS

Overview

The Accelerated School is a type of school designed to hasten and enrich the learning process for disadvantaged students. The model was designed by Henry Levin at Stanford University. While the model has recently been extended to middle schools, it is at the elementary level where Accelerated Schools have been most fully developed. The accelerated elementary school strives to raise the achievement level of its students sufficiently so that they are at least at grade level by the end of the sixth grade and ready to succeed in secondary school. Schools can accomplish this goal, according to proponents of Accelerated Schools, by creating a learning environment distinguished by high expectations for students, high status for teachers, and substantial involvement of parents.

Accelerated Schools attempt to radically transform the entire elementary school; all six primary grades and all classroom activities come under the rubric of the accelerated program. These schools sharply challenge the conventional model for educating disadvantaged students. For example, rather than stressing the use of repetitive drills to hone basic skills, Accelerated Schools emphasize the need to develop higher order thinking skills by showing students how learning can be both enjoyable and relevant to their lives.

Program Design and Governance

In its literature describing the model, the Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) identifies three overarching principles. Unity of purpose is the principle that, following a period of serious reflection and debate, the school's on-site administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other interested community members will reach agreement about the school's fundamental goals. Schools receive the autonomy to choose specific goals that can serve to organize all activities that take place in classrooms and other parts of the school. Still, the ASP does suggest one paramount goal for all participating schools: to raise the performance levels of students so that every student is achieving at least at grade level by the time he or she leaves the school.

The second principle, empowerment, refers to the importance of providing an expanded role in school governance for all key participants at the school site, including teachers and parents. In this model, power over the educational process resides at the school level, and central office administrators are expected to serve as facilitators and resource providers.

The third principle is building on strengths. This refers to the need for schools to locate and use all potentially available assets, including the interests and skills of students and other members of the school community.

Accelerated Schools are controlled through a web of committees, whose membership extends to teachers, instructional aides, parents, and other school staff. There are two types of committees: (1) cadres, small, task-oriented groups that address specific areas of interest in the school (e.g., parent involvement, student discipline); and (2) a steering committee, the body that considers the work of the various cadres and other matters of concern and sets agendas for meetings of the school as a whole.

Curriculum and Instruction

The ASP encourages teachers to "accelerate" and enliven the learning process by developing students' higher-order thinking skills and by relating instructional material to the students' daily experiences. Material is to be organized around themes that cut across traditional academic disciplines, and language skills are to be stressed in each thematic unit. Additional proposed curricular features include common, challenging curricular objectives for all students and multicultural content coverage.

The ASP's model specifies that students should be grouped heterogeneously whenever possible. In teaching heterogeneous classes, teachers are urged to use techniques such as peer tutoring and cooperative learning that involve students helping one another learn. The model also stresses active learning experiences for students (e.g., experimenting, constructing, discovering) and the use of primary sources rather than textbooks.

Outcomes

The approach to school governance and organization at accelerated schools has had considerable success in increasing the staff's sense of ownership over key school decisions. Moreover, the emphasis on shared decision making and collegiality has created an ethos in which teachers work together in planning a wide range of activities, from parent-outreach functions to classroom lessons. Teachers are more willing to take risks and are less afraid to experiment in their lessons when they can share responsibility with colleagues.

The results of efforts to involve parents have been mixed. Most accelerated schools have increased parental involvement in school activities, but have had more limited success with sharing governance authority with parents and community members.

Given the small number of participating schools for which test score data have been publicized, and the relative youth of all these programs, it is difficult at this time to draw conclusions from such data. On Levin's assumption that it takes at least five or six years to completely accelerate a school, the ASP has yet to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Accelerated Schools in operation. Preliminary test scores are promising at some Accelerated Schools, but existing standardized tests may fail to do justice to the range of learning skills and attitudes fostered by the accelerated approach.

Sites Visited in This Study

We visited two schools that adopted the Accelerated Schools framework: one of the Bay Area pilot schools, and one of the many schools that replicated the framework in Missouri.

2. THE COMER PROCESS

Overview

The School Development Program (SDP), better known by the name of its founder, Dr. James P. Comer, is a process designed to change the climate of schools that primarily serve disadvantaged children and youth so as to make it easier for them to succeed in school. The "Comer process" uses a revised governance structure and revitalized bonds between the school, the family, and the community

to help children learn, parents function more effectively in supporting and educating their children, and teachers develop professionally.

Comer, a Professor of Child Psychiatry at Yale University's Child Study Center (CSC), developed the program to make schools more responsive to the needs of at-risk children and their families. He combines theories grounded in child development, behavioral psychology, social and cultural history, and the special needs of minority groups to explain why schools do not succeed for many students and to provide guidance for constructive change.

Program Design and Governance

Unlike many other school reform strategies, the SDP is a process, not a model. Each Comer school will implement the program differently, depending on the personalities of the staff and the specific needs of the schools and its students. The basic components of the process include three essential features: the School Planning and Management Team (SPMT), the Mental Health Team (MHT) and the Parent Program.

The SPMT is the backbone of the program. This team, made up of the principal, teachers, other school staff, a parent representative, and an expert in child development, is the governing body in a Comer school. The principal shares decisionmaking power and authority with the group, although he or she reserves veto power with 51 percent of the vote. One team member acts as Comer facilitator for the school, responsible for soliciting items for the agenda and supervising the membership and operation of the group. A representative of the nonacademic professionals in the school, usually a psychologist or counselor, makes recommendations to the team on how to incorporate issues involving child development and mental/emotional health into decisions affecting school climate.

The Mental Health Team, made up of classroom teachers, resource teachers, administrators, psychologists, social workers, and nurses, brings principles of child development into decision making to improve school climate. By design, the MHT does not focus on individual children, looking instead at patterns in the school and ways to solve recurring problems.

The third component of the Comer structure is the Parents' Program, designed to involve parents in social activities at the school. Parents select at lease one representative to serve on the SPMT.

The three principles that underlie the SDP process--no fault, collaboration, and consensus--set the tone for the three governing groups, reflecting Comer's emphasis on cooperation and decision by consensus rather than decree.

Curriculum and Instruction

To ensure effective implementation and utilization of the Comer process, school staff should be familiar with the principles of child development that are the philosophical basis for the program. Once the process is in place and working to its full potential, the theory goes, any substantive reform can take place. The SDP does not prescribe any particular reforms; most notably, there is no required curriculum. New curriculum is designed by teachers in response to the specific needs of their students.

Outcomes

Comer schools implement the process in very different ways. In some cases, the focus is on increasing parent involvement; in others, there is a stronger emphasis on staff training in collaborative decision making.

The effects of the Comer process on student academic progress are indirect. The components of the process itself do not directly affect the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom. The Yale Child Study Center staff evaluated the two original pilot schools, finding increased attendance, improved academic achievement, and a reduction in discipline problems. However, following the program's districtwide expansion, these schools' improvement record has tapered off. Because many other factors influence school achievement trends, the current challenge is to develop ways of accurately measuring the effects of staff empowerment, parent involvement, and enhancement of school climate on student academic progress.

Sites Visited in This Study

We visited two of the pilot schools in New Haven, Connecticut, and several replication sites in Prince George's County, Maryland.

3. SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT

Overview

Strictly speaking, school-based management (SBM) involves delegating much of the authority for managing schools from district and state educational agencies to each individual school. The rationale behind this reform is that administrators, teachers, and other staff at each school site are better suited than others to make judgements about the needs of the school's population and to develop strategies to address those needs. Hundreds of districts across the United States have implemented different forms of school-based management, but typically only a select number of schools in each district are rewarded with autonomy, and most authority is exercised by the schools' principals.

Two new developments in the conceptualization of school-based management have made it a promising strategy in the effort to reform schools serving disadvantaged populations. First, several districts have begun implementing school-based management systemwide, allowing all schools--including those with both poor and excellent performance records--to make critical decisions about the way they educate their students. Second, many of these districts share a belief that teachers should not just advise the principal, but should actually share the responsibility for managing their school. As a result, these districts have implemented a shared decision making (SDM) component in conjunction with school-based management.

For this study, we visited two districts, one small and one very large, that are currently implementing SBM/SDM models.

Santa Fe, New Mexico

The Santa Fe Public Schools are entering their fifth year of the School Improvement Program, a restructuring effort in which each school in the district is offered the opportunity to reconfigure its

administration to reflect its particular circumstances and needs. The district has developed a partnership with he Panasonic Foundation, which provides consultants to schools considering restructuring and offers funds for teacher training.

The impetus for change in each school comes from teachers. When staff at a school agree on the need for restructuring, they submit their plan to a committee of teachers and administrators for consideration. If the plan is approved, it is sent to the assistant superintendent for instruction and on to the superintendent for approval. Minor changes affecting classroom instruction or other similar matters need not be approved, but major changes in school administration, scheduling, and curriculum must be approved.

The district employs a half-time school improvement coordinator to facilitate communication among the restructuring schools, the central office, and Panasonic. The assistant superintendent for planning and development, a newly created position, will coordinate and administer the School Improvement Program for the district. In addition, the coordinator works closely with the state and local coordinators of New Mexico's Re:Learning program, which is implementing Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools Model at many elementary schools throughout the state. While schools are in no way obligated to join the Coalition, the Re:Learning program offers a convenient organizing framework for restructuring schools.

The elementary school we visited in Santa Fe chose to eliminate the position of principal and replace it with a management team of four teachers. The school has implemented a new instructional program, the Core Project, an integrated social studies curriculum incorporating interdisciplinary teaching and multi-age grouping of students. Staff roles have changed considerably, and teachers believe that their management team model is a success. While the school is fourth from the top in the district in the proportion of at-risk students it serves, its achievement scores on standardized tests are about average for the district and have risen steadily during the last five years.

Dade County, Florida

The Dade County Public Schools implemented its SBM/SDM pilot program in 1987. The program was designed to enhance the professional stature of teaching and allow individual schools greater flexibility in designing their own curriculum, allocating their own budget, and creating their own distinctive school atmosphere. This change derived from a practical concern: the need to attract and keep qualified teachers. The United Teachers of Dade, an AFT affiliate, worked with the district on reform design.

Of 55 schools that applied for special status, 33 were accepted into the pilot program. Under the SBM/SDM program, each participating school forms an administrative committee, composed of representatives from different constituencies, as determined by each school. While each committee has a different structure, teachers and union representatives tend to form a majority on the committees.

The school budget is allocated to each school council in a lump sum payment. The council is then responsible for setting spending priorities, allocating the budget, hiring staff, and performing other administrative tasks. A number of schools have developed new programs to address problems of particular concern to their school, often targeted at special or at-risk populations, or designed to alter the overall school climate.

We visited an inner-city elementary school, where the staff have used their new authority to make a number of changes, including the addition of a developmental first grade, a hands-on science lab, a pre-kindergarten program, a night librarian for parents and students, Early Bird classes, and Saturday

school. Led by the principal, the school has initiated extensive community involvement and outreach activities.

A three-year district evaluation of the 33 pilot schools showed that aggregate student achievement scores at participating schools, as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, did not improve. This aggregate measure masks significant improvements at some schools. Moreover, the district has succeeded in its goal of attracting more qualified teaching candidates. The evaluation found that staff morale and participation in major decisions improved over the three-year period. Teachers' overall satisfaction with their jobs was significantly higher in SBM/SDM schools than in other schools. Finally, participating schools had significantly higher attendance rates and lower dropout and suspension rates at the secondary level.

DISCUSSION

The profiles in this section represent three different approaches to school-based reform. The Accelerated Schools Model, the Comer Process, and the two school-based management programs are ambitious efforts to make schools and teachers the agents of reform. In this chapter, we summarize key aspects of these comprehensive approaches.

Program Adoption

Marketing and dissemination. School-based management--a term which appropriately describes all of the approaches in this section--is currently receiving a great deal of media attention. There is a prevailing sense among policymakers, educators, and the public that reforms based on incremental changes or new instructional technologies have largely failed. In this climate of skepticism about small-scale initiatives, the notion of comprehensive overhaul of the system implied by school-based management has a receptive audience. While some of this intuitive appeal is based on a simplistic understanding of the issues, the attention currently given to school-based reforms reflects a genuine yearning for a new change paradigm--one that comes from those directly involved. In some cases, the developers of these projects have designed programmatic approaches that confirm what many educators already believe. Much more than the reforms profiled in Chapter 2, these comprehensive reforms benefit from charismatic leadership to create and sustain a collective vision of what schooling for at-risk students can be.

Successful implementation of these reforms requires more than imaginative leadership. Potential reformers need a realistic appraisal of what will be involved in these transformations of governance and practice. These programs may appeal, for example, to those who think that a little reshuffling of the hierarchy is an inexpensive route to fundamental reform. As the case studies in Volume II illustrate, these reforms may be impossible without additional resources--particularly teacher time. To the developers' credit, they do seek to convince prospective adopters that the process will be complex, time consuming, and not necessarily smooth.

Pre-implementation preparation. An appropriate climate for introducing school-based reforms includes the realization by all participants of the long road ahead. Consensus among stakeholders is also a key ingredient in success. The timing of reaching such consensus may vary; typically, a group of interested staff learns more about the program and brings others around before the decision to adopt is made. We found convincing evidence of the unfortunate results when key stakeholders were left out of the deliberations early on.

While all faculty members need not agree on ultimate objectives at the beginning, a shared decisionmaking model has the best chance for success when there is a common understanding of the need for fundamental change. Moreover, school staff should have some confidence in their ability to work together. , In districtwide school-based management initiatives, this may happen early in the process, since schools must often submit a collectively-developed school plan to be accepted into the program.

Amount of staff consensus required. All of these programs thrive on maximum teacher involvement. While the models do not require equal participation from all staff, all the models depend on expanding access to decisionmaking. Furthermore, although the models can withstand passive indifference on the part of some teachers, vocal dissent from powerful individuals or groups can in fact interfere with the process.

Systemic change required. To work best, school-based management programs need to be part of a change process at all levels of the system. At the school level, governance reorganization

means that principals need to relinquish some authority and teachers need to take on decisionmaking roles. Both the Accelerated Schools and Comer models call for increased parental involvement as well.

At the district level, important changes are needed, and we saw some evidence of initial steps in this direction. At a minimum, waivers of regulations may be needed for budget, personnel, and scheduling decisions. Moreover, for school-based management to become a reality, the district system must change from one geared toward compliance monitoring and regulation to one based on facilitation and support. Unions, too, may need to change the focus of their efforts.

Program Design

Program philosophy. The driving spirit behind all of these reform efforts is the conviction that fundamental problems in the system cannot be solved through tinkering with the existing structure of the school. Beyond this general consensus, each approach has its own emphasis and direction. Comer believes that the mismatch between home and school cultures contributes to the educational disadvantage of low-income and minority children and wants to see parents become participants in school. Levin believes that the conventional wisdom about remediation is misguided. School-based management as practiced in Dade County centers on the need for teachers to become expert professionals. These various emphases have chosen the same means: governance restructuring to allow those "in the trenches" to determine the direction and scope of the change. All share an equally strong belief in change as an ongoing process rather than a fixed goal.

Target population. While the pioneers of these efforts have the ultimate welfare of students clearly in mind, it is not unfair to say that their energies are focused on enhancing the authority of teachers and, to some extent, parents. Although few would argue that a redistribution of power is necessary for its own sake, all who advocate shared decisionmaking see it as an essential first step in the pursuit of better instruction.

Decisionmaking processes. In all of the governance-based reform models we studied, the principal no longer has unilateral authority. At most of the sites we visited, all aspects of school operation--budget, hiring, and curriculum--are subject to debate; decisions are reached by consensus of the faculty or those who choose to become involved. Indeed, this is the defining characteristic of these models.

Governance-based reform models are ambitious and complex, but their advocates believe that the end result--the creation of a learning organization that is continuously improving and responding creatively to new demands--is well worth the long-term investment of time and energy.

Emphasis on process vs. content. We were told in more than one site that "Change is a journey, not a destination." In other words, for some of these programs, change is the content as these programs begin to feel their way through the reorganization process. The Accelerated Schools have explicit guidelines for the content of instruction, based on accelerated curriculum and thematic learning. For the other programs, the point is to rethink curriculum from scratch, using a mission statement or collectively-developed vision as a guide.

Often, school-based management will turn as a starting point to a pre-existing curriculum framework that is consistent with the school vision. For example, the elementary school in Santa Fe has turned to the Re:Learning network for guidance in developing its social studies curriculum. This seems to provide a much-needed focus in the early stages of implementation.

In short, the development of content in all three models is viewed as a constant process of experimentation and refinement. Even in Levin's model, the strength of the program, as reported by teachers, lies in the ability to try, fail, and readjust.

Materials vs. staff development. It will be obvious by now that these programs offer no prepackaged materials. Ongoing staff development is the core of shared decisionmaking models. Unlike many reform initiatives, it is usually up to the teachers themselves to decide what kind of assistance they most need. Often, they share resources among themselves. However, there was a

nearly universal plea for more access to external networks and information about good practice among the staff in the sites we visited.

Implementation Issues

Importance of key actors. Leadership is a key determinant of program success. While daily maintenance and management continue to be important, the ability to inspire, provoke, and motivate is crucial. Leadership comes from a number of sources in shared decisionmaking models.

All sites implementing the Comer Process and Accelerated Schools model described interaction with the program developers themselves as important. In some cases direct communication occurs frequently; in others a facilitator provides an indirect link. In some ways, the programs were less dependent on the "founders" than we had expected: much of the emphasis in both programs demands the development of problem-solving capacity in the schools themselves. As a result, many sites had achieved a great deal of independence and looked to the developer only for advice on particularly thorny issues.

While the symbolic value of encouragement from the leaders and their staff cannot be underestimated, the nominal lead person on-site is equally important to the successful growth of the process. In some cases this was the principal; in others, a facilitator was charged with supervising the new governance approach. It is not an exaggeration to say that these individuals make or break the projects: they must be superb managers, they need to know the school culture and how to work with it; they must be tireless visionaries at times; they occasionally must succeed in achieving consensus out of chaos; and they must be able leaders and followers. Several principals described the delicate process of badgering groups to act--and then stepping back to watch. They must constantly be willing to teach and to learn simultaneously.

People overseeing the process at the district level must develop many of the same qualities. Many who were accustomed to issuing mandates in the past must learn to listen to new ideas and develop ways of assisting in their implementation. We found almost universal recognition on the part

of district personnel that it was insufficient simply to remove constraints and then expect change to occur.

District support achieves little, of course, if teachers do not find the energy and commitment to make it work. Teachers who have long been satisfied with the status quo do not make the best candidates for reform, but many are brought on board as they begin to see the possibilities. Ideally, teachers and leaders must work together to make the process non-threatening for all.

Effects of district context. Technical support, funding, and ongoing training are crucial. We were told over and over again that without a clear commitment from the district these efforts would be doomed. Perhaps most important, a climate conducive to risk-taking needs to be created and maintained.

Local conditions and program fit. Unlike smaller-scale reform efforts, the existing cultural and political situation in the school is extremely important. Most of the places we visited seemed to be "ready" for these ambitious efforts; many others may not yet be.

Good vertical and horizontal linkages within the organization may be a prerequisite to smooth initiation of the group planning process. Most of the schools we visited reported good working relationships among staff prior to the implementation of the shared decisionmaking process, so the transition was relatively easy. The relationship with the district is also important. Without attention to these two sets of connections, the programs may founder in the early stages.

Existing tensions and competing factions among faculty and staff can be problematic. We did encounter instances where, although the conflict was not insurmountable, it survived nonetheless in bitter memories. In some cases, the solution was literally to push out the dissenting individuals through out-of-school transfers. In others, while achieving consensus was difficult it was worthwhile, particularly as early objectors became active supporters. From our observations, this fortunate outcome emerged when members of opposing groups were encouraged to work out fundamental differences at the earliest possible moment. When the group serving as catalyst to the reform worked independently of the opposition, the latter group's resentment was only reinforced.

Internal and external assistance. Even though these reforms are internally generated, they need ongoing guidance and support. We were told in many ways that the traditional once-a-year retreat focusing on group dynamics was inadequate. Teachers appreciated contact with external agents, such as university staff and other staff trying similar reforms, because it contributed to their sense of intellectual growth.

Evolution over time. In many ways, school-based reforms are characterized by trial and error development. The success stories in our group were aware of that fact and welcomed it. If school staffs do not already possess a high degree of tolerance for ambiguity, they must develop it to thrive in this process. Unlike other innovations, there are no shortcuts to a shared decisionmaking arrangement, and each school must recreate the original labor-intensive task of developing collaborative working styles.

Coping skills to confront inevitable barriers are refined along the way, and they will always be necessary. According to all our informants, the main ingredient in survival is a cooperative ethic built on trust. This is essential to create a safe climate, where both successes and failures can be shared. A number of teachers told us how much easier it was to try out new ideas--instructional strategies, a new grouping approach--if there was a secure sense that no one person would take the blame. Interestingly, several principals expressed a similar sentiment: they experienced relief at no longer being the only one responsible for decisions about a change in course.

In a few of our sites, governance structures have been in place long enough as to be almost invisible; teacher responsibility to govern as well as teach has become an accepted part of school life. This institutionalization of decentralized decision making can have two different manifestations. In one, the teachers have internalized their new roles and responsibilities and the situation works well with less constant effort. In the other, absorption into the larger life of the school may produce complacency. In this case, the lack of ongoing struggle, often coupled with flagging leadership, can signal a return to the status quo.

"Disabled" versions: what gets left out. While most of these school-based initiatives include parents in school governance, this seems to be the hardest aspect to implement fully. In most cases, staff and principals were the first to admit that this was an area in need of further attention. In one of our sites, we were told that staff problems needed to be worked out before parents were included--that bringing outsiders in at the beginning would only create additional confusion. Whether parents are increasingly included as this particular program settles in remains to be seen. More commonly, teachers and principals voice frustration at their disappointing results at getting parents to participate more actively. The lesson here is that parent alienation from school is not necessarily solved by offering them roles in school decision making.

These initiatives may also fail to bring teachers into decisionmaking as fully as envisioned. In a few of our cases, governance structures and committee assignments are in place, but few non-trivial decisions are made. Again, this may be a function of the early phase of implementation, or it may reflect unwillingness on the part of the principal to relinquish authority on topics that really matter. Further, we saw one example where a less-than-committed staff was happy to let the principal set policies and coax them into consensus.

A final disabling factor arises in situations where the districts have given their blessing to school-based management in rhetoric (or funds) only. In two of our sites, the schools felt competing pressures; they were encouraged to make their own decisions, while district mandates for testing or specific curriculum requirements were still firmly in place.

Program costs. Information gathered during our visits revealed a number of hidden costs in these programs. While many of the teachers eagerly donated extra time to planning efforts, some staff members are stretched very thin. In some cases, a certain amount of compensated time was funded by the staff development allocation. In addition, teachers and principals creatively arranged schedules through such initiatives as a buddy system to allow teachers to attend meetings or work together during school time.

We have already mentioned the importance of ongoing technical assistance. Other unexpected expenses may arise due to program effectiveness; for example, the collective decision to adopt an innovative curriculum may entail the purchase of new materials. In short, we were told in no uncertain terms by participating staff that choosing school-based management/shared decisionmaking arrangements as an inexpensive route to reform would be an unfortunate mistake. As in the curriculum-based reforms, exact costs will depend on individual school arrangements for freeing up staff planning time.

RESULTS

Quality of implementation and institutionalization. New governance structures are in place and currently operating in all of the sites we visited. The amount of participation in these restructured systems and the degree of actual authority invested in them varied from site to site. It was also clear that many teachers felt professionally invigorated by this process; they believed they had more control over their work and were more effective with students as a result. It was difficult for us to judge the significance of these changes; we have no way of assessing school climate and organization before the reforms were implemented.

Staff pointed to a variety of accomplishments that they attributed to the new decisionmaking process, ranging from cosmetic changes to new curricula. Across sites, questions about basic working conditions, including physical plant problems, were tackled first. Discipline policy, so often a point of contention among teachers and administrators, was frequently the next candidate for revision. New approaches to instruction are often introduced for deliberation only after these essentials are settled.

Administrators also told us that they had changed their leadership styles. Again, these claims are difficult to assess, since the principals did not seem like authoritarian personalities. It is perhaps unsurprising that principals were on the whole delighted with the shift in the hierarchy, since building administrators are often responsible for choosing these reforms.

As outsiders looking in, we cannot determine with precision what factors are most responsible for successful outcomes. The incomplete successes are more easily accounted for; in these cases there was either (1) an in-group and an out-group that had been left out (or pushed out) of the process early on, or (2) leadership that was sporadic or uninspiring. The development and maintenance of the vision takes ongoing stewardship.

In general, teachers cited the safety of the environment for experimentation as the most crucial aspect, in stark contrast to schools where staff are not told that "it's OK to fail." In every site, we were told this in similar words.

Impact on students. The effect of these reforms on student performance is difficult to gauge. In some cases, it may simply be too early to expect the newfound authority and responsibility of the staff to translate into more motivated and inquiring students. We did observe a number of interesting approaches to instruction, and we saw students doing creative, independent projects. Improvements in attendance and disciplinary measures in several sites indicate improvement in school climate, but few sites were able to point to concrete changes in achievement measures.

Problems in evaluation and accountability. Schools involved in these types of restructuring efforts are struggling with evaluation and accountability issues. On the one hand, they recognize and welcome the opportunity to measure their own progress; on the other hand, their goals are broad, the road is a long one, and expectations for immediate results would cripple fledgling efforts. Districts that are fully committed to decentralizing decision making are well aware of the futility of demanding instant results on traditional measures. Two problems in particular complicate conventional assessment in the sites we visited and others like them.

First, when these programs seek to establish new instructional methods based on goals such as advanced skills and problem solving, they find that standardized tests currently in use are inadequate for measuring progress in these areas. Indeed, it may be years before valid tests are developed for assessing these important dimensions of learning. In several of our cases, teachers felt the need to

drill students on test skills to meet the public's conception of progress, which differed sharply from their own newly developed goals.

Second, standardized test scores used to contribute to school report cards are typically aggregate scores for different grade levels in a range of subject areas. They are not individual gain scores; the population that takes the test from year to year may fluctuate significantly. Schools with high proportions of economically disadvantaged students usually have a very mobile population. Indeed, we know that standardized achievement test scores are an excellent indicator of socioeconomic status, and changes in aggregate scores may reflect variations in the economic conditions of the school catchment area far more than program quality. In many of our sites, we were told that living conditions for most of the student population in the surrounding neighborhoods have worsened over the last few years. In contrast, curriculum-based programs such as Reading Recovery are able to track particular students in the skills of interest.

Given these problems, schools and districts may want to consider careful development of alternative indicators, both of achievement and climate, to act as milestones in the process of restructuring governance in schools.

LESSONS FOR SCHOOL REFORM

School-based management/shared decisionmaking programs have broad and ambitious goals. Once they are in place, the work has only just begun; the effort to rethink all traditional assumptions about teaching, learning, and the organization of schooling requires commitment, energy, and vision. While the potential rewards are high, these reforms are the most difficult to do well.

At a minimum, these efforts require the development or refinement of collaborative work patterns. This process typically conflicts with traditional norms in school cultures. Teachers are socialized into a relatively fragmented, insular organization, where their responsibilities outside the classroom are minimal. Cultural change in the direction of productive collegial interaction is a much

more prolonged process than getting used to a new basal reader or following a revised curriculum scope and sequence.

Developing and sustaining productive collaborative cultures is no easy task, however. What is more common, especially given the popularity of the concept today, is what Hargreaves characterizes as "contrived collegiality" (in Fullan, 1990). In this scenario, joint planning sessions become another bureaucratic imperative, leading to an excess of often unwanted contacts among teachers and few meaningful accomplishments.

The changes necessary to work productively in reconfigured organizations can be frightening. Elmore and McLaughlin (1988) describe the "unfreezing" process that teachers must go through in order to let go of former routines and beliefs--a difficult choice when faced with uncertainty. This anxiety may be particularly pronounced in new governance arrangements where procedures and objectives may be unspecified. The flexibility to start from scratch can itself feel threatening to secure habits and ways of teaching. But teachers are rapidly coming to see the importance of this shift, as have educators and the general public--reluctantly, after decades of disappointing results from other reforms.

In order to transfer the power to change in a productive way--rather than merely finding new scapegoats--these reforms require leadership and vision from those who are inside schools and who know the culture well. Political and technical expertise, along with traditional management skills, are also required.

Finally, time, patience, and tolerance for ambiguity are essential. As Louis and Miles (1990) note in their study of change in urban high schools, even small-scale reforms require several years before desired outcomes can be achieved. It may be that the culture of evaluation experts and policymakers must experience an equally dramatic shift in perspective and expectations in order for these reforms to flourish.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The profiles in the previous chapters summarize observations of six school reform strategies operating in 12 different settings. They are all located in schools that serve large numbers of at-risk children and youth. In Chapter 2, we examined programs that explicitly address curriculum and instruction. These three frameworks--Reading Recovery, Success for All, and the Academy model--operate with specified goals for student performance. Chapter 3 focuses on more comprehensive strategies of school reform; the Accelerated Schools Project, the School Development Program, and school-based management all approach school improvement through a reorganization of governance. In each program, authority for many decisions traditionally made at the district level has shifted to the school building. Along with the principal, various combinations of teachers and parents have acquired decisionmaking roles. In these reform efforts, expectations of increases in student achievement are less concrete in the initial years of the new system.

The schools selected for our study took on these improvement strategies for a variety of reasons. One purpose of this report is to help inform that decision for future practitioners. Because we were particularly interested in program evolution and the dynamics of implementation, we paid special attention to the reported experiences of all the various constituencies in each reform: district administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and students.

All of these interventions involve a certain amount of risk, as do all attempts to change ways of thinking and behaving--the "regularities"--of schools. Reform efforts necessarily involve a threat to the security of the status quo; not surprisingly, the most logical places to attempt reform initiatives are those where there is widespread recognition that accepted ways of operating are not working adequately. Because these failures can be often be glaringly apparent in schools with a large proportion of disadvantaged students, teachers and administrators there are often eager candidates for

reform. The conclusions here are intended to guide their planning and development of effective improvement strategies.

The broader the scope of the intervention, the more implementation is dependent on context rather than content. The curriculum-based reforms that direct teachers to change their accustomed ways of delivering instruction are not foolproof, but they are less susceptible to large variations from setting to setting. In these approaches, success of implementation may be unaffected by such local characteristics as the existence of a collaborative culture in the school or linkages among staff and administrators. In this sense, curriculum-based reforms are more predictable interventions. When competently managed, Reading Recovery looks very similar across sites. The evolution of school-based management, on the other hand, will vary enormously according to the political and cultural characteristics of its milieu.

While curriculum-based reforms depend on the motivation and skills of individual teachers and proficient management, more comprehensive reforms depend on group dynamics and expert leadership. Reforms that provide teachers with skills and knowledge to do their jobs better typically become self-reinforcing. When staff are able to see concrete results in improved student performance through the use of different instructional strategies, a reform is unlikely to encounter resistance. In this case, training and gradual introduction to the new technology are important components in effecting change. In the curriculum-based programs we examined, ongoing management was also required to provide assistance, oversee materials, and supervise daily maintenance. In governance reforms, the process is slower and often lacking in immediate results--the delegation of new roles and responsibilities does not quickly translate into tangible differences in the classroom. Because the rewards are less visible early on, leadership that successfully promotes a common vision of future goals is essential. These strategies often require participants to re-evaluate their working identities and perspectives on their roles. All of the school-based programs we visited demand--at least in theory--that teachers collectively rethink their individual responsibilities for student

learning and develop new ways to approach those obligations. This is cultural change, and guiding this process calls for someone skilled in group dynamics more than administration.

In very different ways, almost all of the reform strategies we examined confer greater decisionmaking authority on teachers. These new responsibilities range from enhancing the ability of teachers to diagnose reading difficulties to giving teachers the chance to hire their colleagues. Obviously there are important differences in these various enhanced roles, both in the energy and skills required of teachers and in the net impact on students. In small and large ways, both the staff development sessions in Reading Recovery and the teachers' deliberations on their school budget in Dade County contribute to teachers' sense of themselves as professionals. In almost all cases, teachers welcomed this increased responsibility and seemed to thrive on it, often despite greater demands on already busy schedules.

Successful reform efforts take time--before adoption, during implementation, and even after institutionalization. The change strategies we examined had very different timetables for implementation. In all cases, introduction of the effort was smoothest when there was sufficient time at the beginning for planning and for simply getting used to new ideas. For the curriculum-based reforms, this may mean gradual introduction, such as the Success for All strategy of staggering implementation both by component and by grade level. For governance reforms, programs were more successful when they had longer timetables for assuming new responsibilities and more realistic expectations for when ambitious ideas might be accomplished.

Impact on student learning is more predictable and immediate from successful implementation of curriculum-based reforms; the goals of governance reforms are long-range and constantly evolving. The programs we studied in the curriculum category had a range of objectives: literacy skills, grade-level proficiency, high school completion, and job preparation. All of these goals are measurable, and evidence of success is readily apparent. Because of the level of specificity, these programs are able to target particular students who need the most help in attaining these objectives; they also equip teachers with appropriate instructional tools. As a result, the

curriculum-based packages reviewed here are relatively manageable. Other more comprehensive efforts to radically transform instructional content--such as the new California mathematics framework--require a substantial amount of new and different teacher knowledge. Not surprisingly, they are far less predictable.

The type of district commitment required depends on the scope of the reform. In curriculum-based interventions, the district is usually responsible for funding and technical assistance. In addition to these important contributions, school-based reforms require leadership and genuine commitment--which may translate into a reorganization of the district office. In most of the six school-based sites we visited, district administrators were well aware of the need to reconfigure their own roles and responsibilities to complement the changing roles of school staff. Typically this will call for a shift from monitoring to guidance, as well as the development of updated assessment and accountability mechanisms.

Without sustained leadership and teacher commitment, sweeping changes may be trivialized or absorbed into traditional structures. In Cuban's (1989) sense, intended second-order fundamental design alterations are reduced to first-order changes. In other words, a governance reform meant to redistribute power and responsibility may turn into yet another add-on; e.g., an extra weekly meeting after school. Huberman and Miles (1984) call this process "blunting" or "downsizing." Schools, like other cultures, are biased toward the status quo, and it takes an extraordinary effort to reconfigure key organizational arrangements. This is particularly true in settings with long histories of experimental reforms where staff have become skeptical of failed interventions.

None of these school reform initiatives is inexpensive; the costs of the curriculum-based reforms can be more accurately predicted up front. Reading Recovery, Success for All, and the Academy model all require new funds for training and salaries. Their price tags are reasonably straightforward and can be projected for several years in advance. Given their successful records of attaining their objectives across many sites, districts are able to judge for themselves whether or not they are likely to be worthwhile investments. In governance reforms, the costs are more hidden and

unpredictable. Attempts to create time necessary for effective collaboration without new resources have been disappointing; there are clear limits to the amount of reshuffling of staff and schedules that schools can feasibly handle. In our set of schools, the time required to govern schools diminished to some extent after the first few years but still asked much more of teachers than centrally-managed schools do. Opportunities for continuing professional development are considered essential to avoid stagnation and a return to the status quo.

Involving parents in these new reform initiatives is often extremely challenging, even when changes offer parents decisionmaking roles. At all the schools we visited, teachers and administrators were most frustrated with their limited gains in parent participation. While the curriculum-based reforms ask relatively little of parents, the school-based reforms we examined all seek to increase parents' role in school life. Although all schools had made gains in this area, we often found that the parent role on governing committees was a token one. Differences in race, ethnicity, and class between school staff and parents still present frustrating barriers to collaborative work. Our findings suggest that the most effective outreach efforts involved frequent opportunities for social interaction along with increased chances to address concerns through governance positions.

In the programs we visited, there was a correlation between the amount of problem solving effort required of teachers in the different models and the nature of learning opportunities subsequently offered students. This was true for both curriculum- and governance-based reforms. In Reading Recovery, for example, teachers must learn and understand a new set of strategies for rapid diagnosis and resolution of early reading problems. This is a long, ongoing process that requires a great deal of practice and exchange among teachers. The students, in turn, are required to develop independent learning strategies; they are not permitted to get by by having answers fed to them. In the Accelerated Schools Project, teachers must struggle to develop new ways to teach low-achieving students in unfamiliar ways, and students work on challenging tasks rather than repetitive drill. In Success for All, teachers are taught how to deliver instruction using new materials, and students are asked to absorb that content, either individually or in groups; problem-solving is not

an explicit goal for either party. We suggest this as a working hypothesis based on our 12 sites, and it fits with related research on instructional reform. Simply put, creating challenging work for students is not easy; asking more of students takes imagination, new knowledge, and careful planning. It appears that instruction in "advanced skills" may inevitably require hard intellectual work for teachers as well.

Effective school reforms are designed with the local setting and existing school culture in mind. In most of the programs we examined, school faculty were willing to take on the added obligations of learning new approaches. In many cases, the impetus came from school staff themselves, and commitment to a serious effort was guaranteed. Reforms can certainly be initiated by the district, but administrators should recognize that particularly with comprehensive initiatives the characteristics of the existing school culture, including the quality of collegiality at the site, may well determine the progress and eventual success of the intervention. Districts should also consider the existing policy configuration before introducing a new reform strategy. As Darling-Hammond (1990) points out, "policies do not land in a vacuum; they land on top of other policies." Teachers who are confronted with multiple layers of sometimes conflicting mandates may be unable to respond appropriately to any of them.

Curriculum-based reforms need a realistic timetable for implementation, ongoing technical assistance, and competent management. The facilitator of these reforms needs both administrative and "people" skills to effectively mediate among staff participants, the school, and the district. For best results, this facilitator should have authority to monitor and evaluate the progress of the intervention.

Governance reforms need several years for planning, gradual implementation, and flexible assessment mechanisms to monitor progress; they should formulate clear goals for student outcomes at the very beginning. All school reform initiatives require ongoing evaluation to help guide the path of change. Because part of the content of school-based reforms is the process itself, new systems must be developed to measure progress in forging collaborative working relationships and to assess the impact of collectively made decisions. It was evident from this study that the first

stage of school-based decisions typically does not lead to monumental changes in curriculum and instruction. Rather, housekeeping matters and key aspects of the working conditions in school are debated and resolved first. This should be recognized as an inevitable--and healthy--step on the road to autonomy. It does mean that high-stakes assessment of these reforms based on student scores on achievement tests places an unfair burden on participants and may cut the effort short in most settings.

School-based management reforms should consider early adoption of a curriculum framework or set of instructional objectives. The specification of goals embodied in a "vision" is an important beginning, but it is rarely sufficient to guide planning. School governance committees would be well advised to adopt a structure of some kind to help direct initial efforts, such as the Re:Learning system adapted in a school we visited. In addition to providing a focus for instructional planning, the use of a model offers opportunities for early, small-scale wins necessary to gradual institutionalization of change efforts. Without a curriculum "anchor," projects typically overindulge in long-term, unfocused process work.

In choosing a change strategy, districts must be aware of their own obligations in comprehensive reforms. If district administrators are unable to make a commitment to internal restructuring of their own, then smaller-scale, curriculum-based reforms may be more realistic options. Staff in all the school-based management reforms discussed the importance of creating an encouraging and risk-free climate. Some districts may be under too much political pressure to show instant results to be logical candidates for this kind of experimentation.

Regardless of the type of reform selected, increased professional opportunities for teachers and enhanced decision making may increase the chances of long-term institutional growth. Reforms that involve teaching teachers to use a new set of materials or instructional strategy may result in behavioral change, if closely monitored. Changes in curriculum and instruction that enhance the professional capacity of teachers and contribute to their knowledge base and ongoing intellectual growth have a much broader positive impact on the school as a whole. Reforms that limit

rather than enhance teacher discretion may have the unintended consequence of damaging morale and increasing cynicism. We saw several examples of reforms initiated by teachers that were operating at a high energy level three years and more after development--a relatively long half-life for enthusiastic implementation of change. We believe that the extensive research in organizational theory about the importance of a sense of control in the workplace holds true for educators as well. Larry Cuban's (1984) analysis of a century of school reform suggests that wherever classroom change occurred teachers were active collaborators in the process.

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The choice of a reform strategy in high-poverty schools should focus on the development of all who participate in the schooling process, both children and adults. This focus on fostering internal capacity to generate reform may be particularly important in view of changes in both the demographic profile of the school-age population and rapidly evolving needs of the modern workplace. Schools can profit from the experience gathered by Peters and Waterman (1982): the most successful innovative companies were particularly adept at continually responding to changes of any sort in their environments.

The best examples of the schools studied here have created more challenging environments for people who teach and learn in them. They are all based on careful analysis of aspects of the schooling experience that must change in order for at-risk students to thrive. Given a clear understanding of the complexity of the task, schools might well consider any one of these six innovative frameworks as promising alternatives to current practice.

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